



OTAGO BRANCH

А.П.О.

YARNS OF THE SEVEN SEAS

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A.P.O.



SHIP "MAID OF JUDAH."

(From a Painting by J. SPURLING).

Those splendid ships, each with her grace, her glory,
Her memory of old song or comrade's story,
They mark our passage as a race of men,
Earth will not see such ships as those again.

John Masefield.

YARNS *of the* SEVEN SEAS

BY

COMMANDER F. G. COOPER
R.D., R.N.R.

WITH A FOREWORD BY

CAPTAIN SIR ARTHUR ROSTRON, K.B.E., R.D., R.N.R.
Commanding Cunard R.M.S. "Berengaria"

"Speakin' in general, I 'ave tried 'em all,
The 'appy roads that take you o'er the world.
Speakin' in general, I 'ave found 'em good
For such as cannot use one bed too long,
But must get 'ence the same as I 'ave done,
And go observin' matters till they die."

—RUDYARD KIPLING.

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TO
C. M. C.
WITH DEEP AFFECTION

A. P. O.

А.П.О.

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А.П.О.

FOREWORD

HAVING known Commander Cooper for many years as ship-mate, mess-mate and in many varied situations—listened for hours on end to his rippling flow of reminiscences—I think I can fairly say that those who pick up his book will not be inclined to put it down in a hurry.

All true sailor men love to yarn about their sailing ship days. It was in sailing ships we learnt our job—learnt what a sailor has to go through—where we learned to jump up and face it each time we were knocked on the head in the nature of a slippery deck, a fall from aloft, or heavy green seas tumbling on deck.

Steam claimed most of us, and so Commander Cooper carries us with him into steam with the pleasanter sidelights, and then eventually comes the Great Adventure in 1914 onwards.

I remember meeting our friend in Gallipoli. How he loved to come off when commanding the *Ceylon* and get a square meal and a "tub." What yarns we had to pitch, and how easily the whole show could have been settled "if we had had the running of it."

Then came Salonique—many a lunch or dinner we had together in my ship when visiting that salubrious port.

When entertaining, I could always rely on Commander Cooper to help me out, and many a hard fought wordy battle we had with opposite sides.

That Conrad is appreciated and understood by Commander Cooper can easily be accounted for; both men were blessed with a rare sense of observation, understanding, imagination, and common-sense, and—just as important—capable of painting in interesting language their impressions and experiences in colourful expressions in such a manner that after being read one cannot help but feel that Romance is still following close at the heel of the sailor.

I feel such a book as “Yarns of the Seven Seas” cannot help but flow in on the crest of the wave and bring with it a feeling that Jack is not altogether such a dull boy as many would have you believe; and am confident that when read will leave one with a desire to re-read, and make everyone feel that the tang of the salt sea yarns is just the tonic necessary to make one cry, “All’s well. Let her go, ‘Gallagher.’”

A. H. ROSTRON.

R.M.S. *Berengaria* AT SEA.

January, 1927.

APOLOGIA

“OF making many books there is no end : and much study is a weariness of the flesh.”

Despite this sage reflection of the preacher of old, the spirit insists on moving me to add yet another to the many.

And so, having committed the offence, it seems to me that I should say something by way of introduction or justification, or both. The object of a preface, foreword, *avant-propos*, or whatever you choose to call it, is, as I understand it, to give the reader some taste beforehand of what is to follow : it also serves the by no means minor purpose of disarming that fearsome person, the critic, before whose dictum far abler pens than mine have been rendered sterile.

I make no claim to literary grace : I am but a plain, blunt seaman, endeavouring to put before the reader those of my experiences—gathered during more than a quarter of a century of going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it, as Satan said to his Maker—which I think of sufficient interest to justify publication.

These memories, musings, or what you will, treat of various periods of life ; that magic period

“When all the world is young, lad, and all the trees are green,
And every goose a swan, lad, and every lass a queen ;
Then hey for boot and horse, lad, and round the world away,
Young blood must have its course, lad, and every dog his day.”

when events impress themselves more clearly on the imagination than in later years ; then a later season

of life, when a more mature judgment is brought to bear on things seen and experienced. In no single instance have I drawn upon my imagination for these discursions : those concerned with ships and the sea are written from memory, or from material supplied by the pages of old log books and journals ; the others are musings or again, what you please, on subjects that interest me, and perchance may interest you.

Permission to reprint has in all cases where possible been asked for and obtained, and suitable acknowledgment made.

I have been careful throughout to mention no names of ships or persons which could, by being identified, cause annoyance or pain to anyone concerned, and I crave forgiveness for the occasional resort to invective : when the emotions are stirred by a sense of injustice or evil conduct, its use, especially by a seaman, may perhaps be justified.

YARNS OF THE SEVEN SEAS

UNDER SQUARE SAIL

"From course to skysail up she soared like a midsummer cloud,
In all this earth I have not seen a thing more brave and proud;
And she is gone, as dreams do go, or a song sung long before,
Or the golden years of a man's youth when they are his no
more."

—"The Ballad of the *Matterhorn*," C. FOX SMITH.

LOOKING back through the years that have gone, I think that the happiest time of my sea life was the years under square sail, spent in one of those most beautiful of all the creations of man, the sailing ship, now, alas, almost a thing of the past. There we garnered the lore of the sea and learned some of its mysteries, and despite opinions to the contrary, I maintain that the steamship bred seaman has not the knowledge, the sea wisdom, or the resource of the man who has spent years in battling with the elements in sailing ships. How well I remember my first ship, and the pride with which I was filled at the thought of being a sailor: in fact I am not sure that I did not consider myself one even before I had joined my ship, for I had crossed the Channel twice on my way to and from school at Brussels, had spent many hours at sea in a small Belgian fishing smack, the *Georgette*, during one summer holiday at Nieuport, Belgium, and had also crossed the Atlantic twice, quite a record for a boy of sixteen!

However, when I set eyes on the vessel that was to be my home for many months, my pride vanished and

I felt a very sad, homesick boy. I had journeyed from my home in the Midlands with my mother, and arrived in Liverpool a couple of days before the ship was to sail; it was in the month of January, and that winter had been a severe one: it was the year when the *Bay of Panama* was lost at the mouth of the Helstone River, near Falmouth, and the *Enderby* on the Goodwin Sands, wrecks which impressed themselves on my boyish memory, and have remained with me through the years.

We arrived in Liverpool at dark and while my mother went to stay with friends, I went to the Sailors' Home, determined to make an early start in the life I had chosen, and found there my future messmates, all of whom were to me old sea dogs, for had they not made long voyages, while I was the despised "first voyager"? I assumed an air of bravado before them, but my heart was heavy, and when I went to bed that night I shed very unsailorlike tears, and wished myself back in my own comfortable bedroom at home. The next day was cold and wet, and my mother and I went to inspect the ship and my quarters. She was lying in the Salthouse Dock, and instead of the stately fabric of my imagination, I saw before me a small barque, obviously old, and very dirty. She was deeply laden and her decks were littered with ropes, stores and other odds and ends, and my future messmates, who had joined the ship a week previously, and looked so brave and nautical the night before in their brass buttons and badge caps, were busy among this confusion, dressed in blue dungaree overalls and tam-o'-shanter hats, under the supervision of a small man with a red beard.

We went on board and inspected the half-deck—the apprentices' quarters in a sailing ship—a small, evil-smelling den reached by descending a very steep ladder leading from the fore part of the poop deck; there were six bunks in it, four athwartships and two fore and aft; a small, dirty table was slung between

two stanchions in the middle of this den, our sea-chests were ranged around it, evidently intended to serve the purpose of seats, of which there were none, and suspended over the table was a grimy lamp with a broken chimney. These were the "young gentlemen's" quarters, and I could not help wondering what sort of a place the sailors were berthed in : here we were to eat, sleep and have our being for many months ; no roomy cabin, no comfortable saloon in which to have our meals, but just this dirty den, the smell of which almost made me sick. My mother said little, but I judged by her expression that she was not impressed.

On reaching the deck again we were addressed by the red-bearded one, who introduced himself as the mate, and after a few commonplace remarks he informed me that I was to be on board the next forenoon (I did not then know what the forenoon was) as the ship was leaving the dock at noon : we then departed.

The next day, after making some final purchases, I joined the ship, dressed myself in overalls and went to work with the rest of my messmates ; the last good-byes were said and the tugs took hold of us, the ropes were let go and we commenced to move towards the dock gates. It was a bitterly cold day, with a north-west gale blowing, a wind that seemed to search one's body : as we passed through the dock gates, I recollect my mother standing on the quay, a lonely, forlorn figure, waving her handkerchief and occasionally applying it to her eyes, but trying to maintain a brave appearance, and determined to see the last of us. I knew that she was feeling utterly wretched, and I felt then, as I pulled on cold, wet ropes, that I would give anything to be once more by her side, and returning home with her. I suppose that all sailormen have gone through the same thing in their youth, all experienced the same feeling of homesickness, just as in later life we experience similar feelings when we

bid good-bye to our wives before starting on a voyage : it is all part of the price that we have to pay for being sailors.

Once at sea and settled down to the routine of ship life, I lost the feeling of nostalgia, and began to take an interest in my duties, and looked forward to arriving at our destination, which was Brisbane. During this outward passage I was initiated into the mysteries of smoking, with a clay pipe and hard tobacco, the latter requiring considerable skill in the cutting up; I was very ill at first, but I persevered, and soon became an inveterate smoker, a habit I have never abandoned, and hope never will. Arrived at Brisbane, our one object in life was to eat : we lived to eat, for we had subsisted on salt meat and hard biscuits for three months, and we had a lot of leeway to make good. In the days of which I am writing, food was cheap and plentiful in Brisbane, and we boys took full advantage of it; for the modest sum of sixpence one could obtain a hearty meal of ham and eggs, or chops, or a steak, with bread, butter, tea and coffee *ad lib*. Much of our scanty allowance of pocket-money was spent on food, for we were healthy, growing boys, and the food question in the ship was a serious one, for we could never get enough to eat.

Despite poor food and hard work we lived and laughed and throve : an illustration of the survival of the fittest, I suppose. We had no cares or responsibilities in those days : we rose early, worked hard for twelve hours each day of the week but Sunday, and still we were never too weary to enjoy ourselves on shore in the evening; we made friends, and on Sundays we would visit them in their homes or they would take us for picnics, and extend to us that hospitality for which Australians are famous; we were just healthy young male creatures intent upon extracting from life all the pleasure we could. And so, in time, we bade good-bye to Brisbane, and visited other ports during that first voyage of mine;

Newcastle, New South Wales, that Cardiff of the southern hemisphere, with its harbour and wharfs crowded with ships, and over all the coal dust, in which we lived while there: the famous, or perhaps I should say infamous, "Black Diamond," where we youngsters would occasionally partake too freely of strong waters, and suffer for it the next day; thence across the island strewn waters of the Pacific tropics, to Santa Barbara, California, surely one of the fairest spots on earth. Even now, after the lapse of many years, I can call to mind its serene, placid beauty; the sea like an azure lake, the outlying islands rising from the blue depths, undulating hills of emerald, fringed with white where the surf breaks upon their shores: the coast-line of the bay, all yellow sand, gradually merging into the various shades of green in gardens and orchards, with which every house seemed to be surrounded: the small town straggling to the foot of the hills, which rise, verdure clad, in the background, and islands, sea, and hills, all bathed in golden sunshine.

And in "this other Eden, demi-paradise" the old barque lay for two months, and I carried away very kindly memories of it and its hospitable people, who had done so much to make our sojourn among them pleasant.

Then came a voyage up the American coast to Royal Roads, Victoria, British Columbia, where we received orders to proceed to Portland, Oregon, and there load grain for home. We arrived at Astoria, at the mouth of the Columbia River, without incident, and from there to Portland, a distance of about one hundred miles up the Columbia and Willamette Rivers, we were taken in tow by one of the stern wheel river steamers—the *Willamette Chief* or *Multnomah Squaw* or some such famous river craft of days gone by—and their method of towing was to lash themselves alongside the ship to be towed. The wild forest scenery of the Columbia River was very

grand and imposing, and one caught occasional glimpses of the snow-clad peaks of Mount Hood and Mount Ranier above the dull green verdure of the pine forests.

During the journey up the river, we boys, ever on the prowl for food, took the opportunity of going on board the tug, as she was lashed alongside us and it was only a matter of climbing over the rail, and there we made the acquaintance of some of the crew, who regaled us with a good American meal—ham and eggs, buck-wheat cakes and maple syrup, and plenty of good coffee, with milk in it (the last item being a luxury to which we were unaccustomed). After this regal repast, our friends discoursed of the manifold advantages to be derived from deserting our ship when we arrived at Portland, and taking to a life in one of the river craft such as the one we were then on board, where food was plentiful and pay good. So profoundly moved were we with the alluring picture drawn for our benefit, that we there and then decided to run away as soon as the opportunity offered, but I may as well admit at once that our resolve never came to fruition, and we continued to live the simple life of sailing ship apprentices.

We loaded a full cargo of wheat at Portland and after a stay there of about a month, we sailed for Falmouth for orders, on the long, long trail round the Horn. After an uneventful passage of about a hundred and forty days, we reached Falmouth in the month of May, and to our surprise, we were ordered to discharge our cargo there. We spent nearly a month in that quaint old Cornish town; then, the cargo being discharged, we were towed to Liverpool, there to be dry docked, overhauled, and loaded for another voyage.

We boys were given leave to go to our homes until the ship was ready for sea again, and we were not long in availing ourselves of our liberty. We packed our kits (not a long job in their then state), took

cab to Lime Street Station, and departed thence for home, having been away for seventeen months.

And so ended my first voyage to sea, now but a dim memory of the past.

I spent several more years under canvas, before finally giving up going to sea and taking to steamships, and I think that a brief account of my last sailing ship may be of interest, so I will tell you about it.

I had given up sailing ships after about six years in them, and thought that I would, as the saying is, go into steam. I made a voyage as third mate of a tramp steamer to the Black Sea and back to Rotterdam and London. Shortly after my arrival in London I was offered a berth in a company whose ships traded on the Indian coast, so I left the Black Sea tramp and after a short holiday I went out to Calcutta as a passenger, and joined my company there. I spent nearly two years in that company on the coast of India, but the climate, and the eighteen hours a day on duty, seven days a week, for the pittance of seventy rupees a month (about £4 13s.) did not appear to me to be profitable employment, so I told the company to go to Hades and took my departure. Within a couple of weeks I returned to my first love, joining a large four-masted barque as chief mate.

She was a fine ship, as ships go, well found and well manned, and during the two months that we lay in Calcutta loading, I found nothing wrong : in fact, after the experience of the past two years I regarded my new berth as a sinecure. I saw little of the captain, as he was out of the ship a great deal, but what little I had seen of him impressed me favourably. In due course the loading was completed, we dropped down to Garden Reach, embarked the sea pilot, and commenced the long tow to the mouth of the Hugli. Arrived at the Sandheads, we bade good-bye to the pilot (he was a man I had known well in Calcutta, and

as he stepped over the rail he said to me : “ You should have a passage down the Bay as pleasant as a summer dream ”), and the long voyage to Hamburg had commenced. I was somewhat strange for a few days at finding myself once again under canvas, but that feeling soon wore off, and I found all the old tricks of the trade returning to me. The second mate and myself kept watch and watch (four hours on duty and four hours off), that being the usual routine in a sailing ship, but that also I soon became accustomed to.

I soon began to notice that the captain had strange habits ; for instance, he never took his meals in the saloon with his officers, and was very irritable and morose. This went on for some time and then he began to wander about the decks clad in strange garments, and interfering with the ordinary routine work of the ship ; in the trade winds he would give orders to take in sail and reduce the ship to what is called storm canvas, which was not exactly conducive to making a good passage ; he would stop all work on deck and send the hands below to stand easy, which annoyed me considerably, for as mate of the ship I was responsible for her upkeep and condition. The days passed, and as my friend the pilot had said, we were having a passage as pleasant as a summer dream, although it promised to be a lengthy one, unless the skipper mended his ways. Among the apprentices in the ship were two or three who were midshipmen in the Royal Naval Reserve, and one fine tropical afternoon one of these boys was busy on the main hatch polishing up the ship’s brass signal gun ; the captain came along the deck, stood and watched him for a time, and then said : “ You’re one of these bloody Royal Naval Reserve warriors, aren’t you, young fellow ? Well now, you just go and get the copper canister with the gunpowder in it from my cabin and let me see you fire that gun.” The youth had to obey, so off he went and brought back the powder, with which he solemnly proceeded to load

the gun ; having put in a sufficient quantity of powder he inserted a canvas wad, and then asked the captain what he should use as a projectile. The reply he received was brief and explicit : “ Fill it up with bloody holystones, you young fool.” This order was obeyed and the gun was loaded and ready for action. “ How do you fire it off ? ” inquired the captain ; he was instructed, and having obtained a red-hot poker from the galley, he applied it to the vent, and with an appalling noise the weapon was fired. Unfortunately, the fire-eating skipper had omitted to observe the direction in which the gun was laid, and as it happened to be pointing forward and upward, the projectiles blew to pieces a brand new foresail, and destroyed parts of the inner jib ! This was evidently the captain’s idea of a good joke, for he laughed loudly and long, and cursed the Royal Naval Reserve warrior for a hoodlum. This little pleasantry cost the sailmaker many hours of labour, to say nothing of the value of a foresail to the owners ; in future I determined to watch my respected captain, and, if possible, lay him by the heels, so to speak.

A few days after this episode the captain came on deck one afternoon lightly clad and with a rifle in his hand : after looking around the decks and aloft, he commenced firing at the main truck, which he did not succeed in hitting, but the bullets made many holes in the main royal (one of the light sails) ; this was too much for my equilibrium, so I expostulated with him on his foolish conduct, and suggested that if he wished to indulge in rifle practice, it would be a good idea if he fired over the side, where no damage could be done. My interference was resented, and my suggestion ridiculed, and to show his complete independence of advice, he started to blaze away at the iron bulwarks, chipping off large lumps of paint in the process and badly denting the plates. I now came to the conclusion that drink was at the bottom of the trouble, for I had noticed on some few occasions

that the captain was somewhat mixed in his speech, and moreover, he exhaled a strong odour of alcohol. I discussed the matter with the second and third mates, but we decided not to take action until things became worse. The voyage progressed and things went from bad to worse : discipline was almost at an end, for the captain allowed the men to loaf about the decks instead of doing necessary work, which was an excellent scheme for the men, but not a good thing for the ship. Discipline became so lax that one of the sailors, a nigger, refused to obey an order that I gave him, and was abusive to me, but a crack over his thick skull with a belaying pin, delivered with some vim, laid him out, and to set an example to the other men, I handcuffed that mutinous nigger to a stanchion on the after-deck, and kept him there for two days on a diet of bread and water, which subdued his ardour, and strange to tell, although the captain saw that nigger chained to a stanchion, he never said one word to me about it. I had one more small disturbance and then the crash came ; my cabin was not being attended to in a proper manner—slops emptied, bed made, deck scrubbed, etc.—so I sent for the steward and remonstrated with him : he, too, was impertinent, and informed me that he was in the ship to attend to the captain, and not to clean up after a “ bloody mate,” as he expressed it ; I was naturally annoyed, and as this steward was apparently unacquainted with my ways, I initiated him into them there and then by “ putting it across him good and hearty,” as they say in the army : my cabin was kept in excellent order from that day, and I had no occasion to make any further complaints. And after that, the deluge, and this was the way of it : we were in the vicinity of Mauritius and it was the cyclone season, and still the weird skipper carried on his pranks ; no preparations were made for bad weather, although we might experience it at any time in those latitudes, and the crew were still allowed to idle away their time. At

this time the ship was in the south-east trade wind, and making the usual desultory progress, when there were indications of a change in the weather, and from my experience of tropical seas I knew that we were in for one of those scourges known as cyclones. I watched the barometer with keen interest, and also the skipper, who was fortifying himself for the ordeal with strong waters; sail was taken in, but still the ship ran on before the increasing gale, and still the captain applied himself to the bottle. The weather became worse, and having made some slight study of cyclonic storms, I had calculated that if the ship were not hove to at once, she would cross the storm centre, which would mean almost certain destruction. I approached the captain and gave him my views in a very decided manner: he told me that he was the master of the ship and would navigate her as he thought fit, and wound up by telling me to go to hell. I then took counsel with the other officers, and put the position before them and assured them that there was no time to waste: immediate action was necessary; I proposed to confine the captain to his cabin, take command of the ship myself, *pro tem.*, and at once heave her to on the right tack. My suggestion was accepted and we proceeded to act at once; the second mate and myself sought the captain and we found him lying over the rail abaft the wheel, hopelessly intoxicated: we took him down to his cabin, abstracted from it all the liquor we could find, and there we locked him in, and took away the key: the liquor we threw overboard. The ship was then put under easy canvas and hove to, and there remained nothing more to be done. The storm took the course that I had calculated it would, and passed some distance from us; all was well and no damage had been sustained, and within twenty-four hours the ship was once more on her course carrying a fair spread of canvas. We then decided to liberate the captain, which was done: I had a heart to heart talk with him on the subject of his conduct, and threatened,

if he continued in the future to act as he had done in the past, to enter the matter in the log book, and also to report his conduct to the constituted authority. I also took that opportunity to inform him that his stock of liquor had been thrown overboard, at which he laughed, and informed me that I had not been smart enough, as he had plenty more stowed away, and so we left it at that.

The voyage progressed and all was well: the captain no more interfered with the men, and I managed to get on with the work of the ship and put her in order. The skipper had occasional relapses from sobriety, but he was no longer aggressive, and kept to his quarters on these occasions. He and I became quite friendly on the passage, and in fits of alcoholic remorse he would relate to me incidents of his youth, and of his early days at sea, and also give me good advice, which amused me, coming from such a source. However, he was quite a good old fellow, and an excellent seaman, but the love of alcohol had made him what he was.

In course of time the ship arrived at Hamburg, about one hundred and thirty-five days, so far as my memory serves me, and the voyage was at an end. The last thing I remember in connection with that ship was the boatswain giving the refractory nigger a good hiding, in payment for all the impertinence he had received from him during the passage, and possibly to remind him that he was only a nigger seaman, and a mighty poor one at that. I parted on excellent terms with the alcoholic skipper, who, despite all that had taken place, appeared to bear me no ill will. He was very drunk when I bade him good-bye, prior to my departure for England, and he thrust an envelope into my hand and wished me every success in the future. The envelope contained a half sheet of paper upon which was written, in very shaky characters, the following words:

“ The bearer, Mr. —, has served as first

mate of the above named ship under my command, on a voyage from Calcutta to Hamburg, during which time he has conducted himself with ability and sobriety, and to my entire satisfaction.

“He is a smart young man.”

The last sentence always struck me as being full of subtle humour, and was worthy of an artist. And so ended my last voyage in sail; I went to England, passed my examination as master, and went into steamships. Some years afterwards I heard of the loss of that old ship with all hands, and the same captain was then in her: may his soul rest in peace in the Port of Many Ships.

SHIPWRECKED

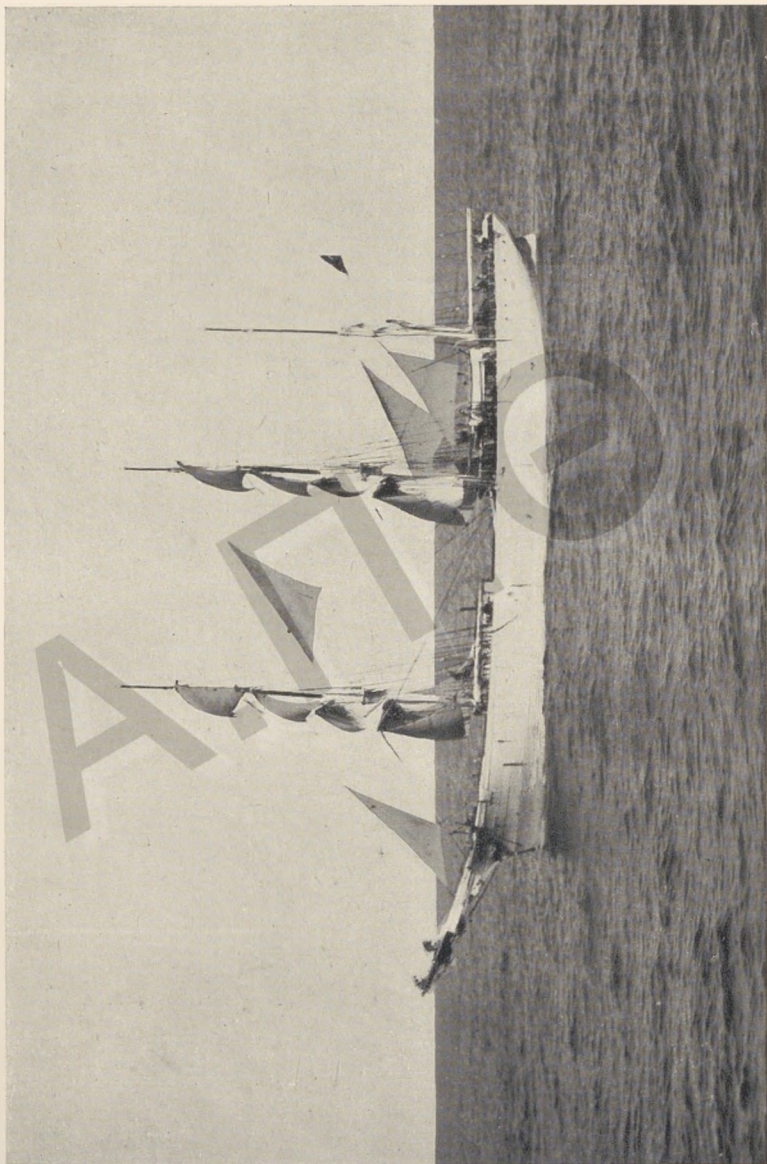
“ We have fed our sea for a thousand years,
And she calls us, still unfed,
Though there’s never a wave of all her waves,
But marks our English dead;
We have strawed our best to the weed’s unrest,
To the shark and the sheering gull;
If blood be the price of Admiralty,
Lord God, we ha’ paid in full! ”

—KIPLING.

TWENTY-FIVE years ago she was old and worn, and in her day had been something of a clipper, but alas, that day was but a dim memory then, and she bore few traces of past grandeur on her poor old battered hull.

She was always undermanned, underfed and as nearly overloaded as was possible without infringing that masterpiece of parliamentary ineptitude, the Merchant Shipping Act.

Her owners were a firm of shipmongers, without conscience or principle, notorious for their parsimony in everything appertaining to the fitting out of the fleet of crazy old sea coffins they managed. There were two partners, each in his own sphere a complete rascal; what the one overlooked, forgot, or didn’t know in the art of shipmongery, the other rectified. I sincerely hope that they have long since departed to those regions where we are told that ships are not, the only reminder to them of their calling when in the flesh being the boat of that grim ferryman, Charon, which would transport their mean and rapacious souls across the Styx on their journey to that special circle of hell which all true seamen are



AND THE CARGO THAT SHE CARRIED WAS'NT WOOL OR CHINA TEA,
BUT SHE TOOK WITH HER THE GLAMOUR AND ROMANCE OF LIFE AT SEA.
K. Tardif.

convinced is reserved for the devourers of widows' houses and the pillagers of seamen.

After a long and weary passage of two hundred and seventeen days from Liverpool, the old barque reached Victoria, British Columbia, and was once more at rest alongside one of the wharves of that port.

On arrival we were short of food and water, and the consequence of so long a spell of salt provisions was that most of us on board were suffering from scurvy in a mild form, myself among the number, so off we were sent to the naval hospital, where a couple of weeks of good food and plenty of rest set us up again, and we rejoined our ship.

The cargo being discharged, orders had arrived for us to proceed to Portland, Oregon, there to load a cargo of grain for the United Kingdom.

This meant taking on board a certain amount of ballast in order to give the ship sufficient stability to make the voyage to Portland under canvas, and the owners being as I have described them, and ballast a commodity that cost money, we naturally took a minimum amount, and being shingle, it was inadequately secured to prevent it shifting in a seaway.

During the old barque's stay at Victoria, all but two of the crew had deserted : one of the apprentices, a lad of seventeen, making his first voyage to sea, had endeavoured to do the same, but his whereabouts was known, so he, poor wretch, was brought on board by the police just prior to sailing, and so ended his attempt to swallow the anchor. As a matter of fact this enterprising young gentleman had been living with a young Indian woman some few miles out of Victoria, and considered he had found sanctuary until the departure of the ship ; he was a cheery youth with an optimistic outlook upon life, considering his environment, but he was suffering from acute depression on being brought back to the ship by *force majeure*, his dreams of freedom at an end, and his

short excursion along the primrose path of dalliance so abruptly ended.

Our crew having, as I said, deserted, we had to resort to the expedient of shipping in their places, men known as "runners" to work the ship to Portland, where, on completion of loading, another crew would be shipped for the voyage to England.

These "runners" are to be found in all the big seaports of the world: they are, as a rule, mariners who have deserted their ships, and are not averse to temporary employment of this sort (generally at a fair rate of remuneration) in order to bring grist to the mill, and incidentally strong waters to their mouths, until such time as the spirit peculiar to seamen moves them to seek fresh fields and pastures new in the shape of another deep water ship.

Our "runners" being on board, more or less sober, and the tug in attendance, we took our departure from Victoria and commenced the long tow down the Strait of Juan de Fuca to the sea.

The weather was cold and a strong wind was blowing, the long tow to the sea giving our temporary crew time to pull themselves together. By the time we reached the sea, and the tug bade us farewell, the short winter day was drawing to a close, and the wind and sea were beginning to rise. Being in ballast, little sail could be carried, and by the time darkness had set in, we were under easy canvas, with a moderate south-east gale blowing and a rough sea.

The old barque rolled and pitched and lurched in a most violent manner, and the weather becoming worse, we were soon reduced to nothing but a main lower topsail. Even this small amount of canvas was too much, so orders were given to furl it, and it was while all hands were making their way down from aloft that the catastrophe occurred. There was a heavy lurch to leeward, an ominous sound of rumbling in the hold, and we knew that the shingle ballast had shifted. The poor old craft lay over almost on her

beam ends, held thus by the weight of the shifted ballast : the captain bawled to us to lay down from aloft and get to the poop ; those of us who were coming down the weather rigging managed to reach there, but the carpenter, an elderly Russian Finn, and like all his race, obstinate and perverse, chose to descend by the lee rigging : when the ship lurched over on her beam ends, he tried to reach the main yard and so cross over to the weather shrouds, but he was not active enough for this feat ; he missed his hold and his footing, fell backwards into the sea, and as he floated aft the spanker boom carried away, hit him as he passed, and that was the last we saw of the carpenter. On reaching the poop, we saw the man who was at the wheel trying to make his way to where the rest of us were clustered in the mizzen rigging, but he had not got far when he was struck by a sea, washed overboard, and disappeared into the darkness.

By this time the ship was on her beam ends and so she lay, while we on the poop scrambled on to her side as she went over, and there we clung, the rain descending in torrents, seas breaking over us, the wind bitterly cold, and the prospect of the ship turning keel up unless the masts were cut away to ease her.

I remember even after the lapse of so many years, that the thoughts which passed through my mind at the time were : how long would it be before the sea washed me overboard ; would it take long to drown, and was it painful ; would my people at home ever know the circumstances, and should I be much missed ? All very ordinary when set down on paper, no doubt, but I was only a lad of eighteen at the time, and a wave of self-pity swept over me at the thought of having to die so young ; that is the only way I can describe, at this time, the emotions that filled me then.

Realizing that something had to be done, and done at once, one of our " runners," whom I will designate as Wilbur Royle, asked the mate where an axe was to

be found, and being told that there was one at the foot of the cabin stairs, he made a bowline in the end of the main brace, slipped into it, and telling us to look out for him he slid down the deck, reached the cabin companion and disappeared from view, to reappear in a few minutes with an axe, slung by its lanyard, round his neck. We belayed the rope, and he scrambled back into the mizzen chains, and without further words he ran along the outside of the ship, balancing himself like an acrobat as the ship pitched and rolled to the sea, until he reached the fore chains, when, with a few blows of the axe he severed the lanyards of the fore shrouds, and away went the foremast by the board. Running to the main chains he cut the lanyards of the main rigging, and that mast went just below the trestle trees. Royle then regained the mizzen chains, and so much was the ship eased by the loss of all this top-hamper, that it was decided not to cut away the mizzen mast unless matters became worse.

The ship now lay a wreck upon the sea, perfectly helpless, and so our efforts were directed to the launching of our only remaining boat; the two forward ones had been swept away by the sea, and one of the after ones was half submerged owing to the position of the ship.

Wilbur Royle, not satisfied apparently with having risked his life once to obtain an axe, hazarded it again for the purpose of obtaining rum and tobacco, the whereabouts of which he had obtained from the captain, and down he went once more to the half submerged cabin, soon to rejoin us with some plugs of tobacco and two bottles of rum, both of which he proceeded to serve out to us, and the tot of rum was as acceptable to us then as was the tot served out to the men in the trenches in Flanders; it put new life and fresh vigour into our half frozen, water soaked bodies. We then set to work with a will, led by the indomitable Wilbur Royle, to launch the boat, and

after about two hours of heavy work we had her in the water and riding astern by her painter.

The reader who has followed me so far will probably think to himself: "This is all very fine, and Wilbur Royle was a stout fellow, but what about the captain and officers, where do they come in?" and his perplexity would be justified, so it is up to me to explain. The captain was old and not in good health at the time, and the catastrophe had entirely unnerved him, therefore much may be forgiven him. The mate was a very different proposition: he was a German, and like all his race of whom I have had experience, a bully when in power and a cur when in trouble. The ship being what she was, he was in her because his services were cheap; decent firms did not, in those days, employ "Dutchmen" as officers in their ships; we carried no second mate: they were not obtainable at the pay offered by such owners as ours.

Such being the state of affairs, it was but natural that a man like Royle should take charge; somebody had to, and he was a better man than any one among us.

The boat being now astern with two men in her, one of them being Royle, it remained for the rest of us to get in her as soon as we could; we did so by sliding down a rope into a lifebuoy which was attached by the log line to the boat, and so, once in the lifebuoy, we were hauled through the water into the boat, and the lifebuoy was pulled back to the ship ready for the next man.

I do not exaggerate when I state that once this method had been proved effective, the first man to make use of it was Mr. Mate, the heroic German!

At last we were all safely in the boat, the painter was let go, and we pulled away from the poor old wreck which had been my sea home for two years, but speaking for myself, I was too thankful to be in the boat and comparative safety, to feel any

deep emotion at leaving her. By this time—about one a.m.—the weather had moderated, although the wind was still blowing a gale and the sea was high; it was bitterly cold, for the climate of Cape Flattery in the winter months is cold and bleak.

There was no compass, so we had to keep the boat's head to the sea, and we all pulled our hardest in order to keep up the circulation of our blood, for we were wet through and half frozen, added to which we had had no food since the previous afternoon. I say that we all pulled: all but two, that is, for the captain was physically unfit and lay in the bottom of the boat in a state of collapse, and the German mate thought it *infra dig.* to pull an oar, and had taken the tiller. It was not long before he proved his incapacity to steer a boat in a heavy sea, for she nearly broached to under his skilful guidance. This was too much for Wilbur Royle: he left the stroke oar, sprang to the tiller, and with a curse he hurled Mr. Mate away from it, quickly unshipped the rudder, and lashing an oar to the stern post, he steered with that, thereby proving himself, if further proof were needed, to be the sterling seaman he was, and he did not once relinquish that oar until we were rescued later on.

And so that long, wintry night wore on, the wind and sea moderating, and dawn found us still toiling at the oars—wet and weary and hungry—tossing about upon the troubled waste of waters, no land, no ship, no help to be seen.

As the sea had subsided considerably by this time, we were able to rest on our oars for brief spells, and it was during one of these spells that we imagined we heard voices; we listened, and yes, undoubtedly the sound of voices, the song of seamen as they hauled on ropes clearly and distinctly borne on the wind to our ears. We strained our eyes to windward, and there, in the grey light of the winter dawn, was a large ship under topsails, not more than

half a mile away, now visible, now invisible, as she rose and fell on the sea.

We raised our voices in one prolonged shout—rather a feeble one, I think—and then bent our backs to the oars, pulling towards the ship. It was not until she was nearly on top of us that we were observed, and as she was only just commencing to make sail after being hove-to during the gale, she had little headway, and so we were able to get the boat alongside her, and one by one we scrambled on board, and left the old boat to her fate. Our rescuer proved to be an American ship, laden with coal from Nanaimo for San Francisco, and once on board, everything possible was done for our comfort.

Our poor old skipper was quite exhausted, and it was some time before he recovered. Sailors soon get over the effects of an experience such as we had gone through, and in a couple of days, after a rest, good food, and some dry clothes, we were all ready to bear a hand, and from then until we arrived at San Francisco we took our share of the work of the ship.

I have kindly memories of that ship: she was a full-rigged wooden ship of about eleven hundred tons; her captain, mates and crew were kindly souls, and I bear them gratitude. Where are they now, I wonder? "Port of Many Ships" has claimed many of them, I expect.

No more bad weather was experienced, but we met with light, baffling winds, which resulted in our not arriving at San Francisco for nearly three weeks. Arrived there, we bade good-bye to that good United States ship, her captain, officers, and crew, and surrendered ourselves to the ministrations of the British Consul, or, as Jack prefers to call him, Counsel. By his orders we were fitted out with a suit of shoddy reach-me-downs, and we apprentices were billeted in a private house where we were made very comfortable.

In a few days' time we were directed to appear at

the Consulate, the crew to receive their pay, and we apprentices to be disposed of as seemed expedient to the Consul. Our owners, true to type, repudiated us, despite the fact that our parents had paid them a substantial premium, ostensibly to be taught the art of a seaman, but in reality to enable them to man their ships with fewer paid men; the institution of premium apprenticeship was always popular with the British shipowner, for the reason just mentioned, besides being an excellent scheme for obtaining free labour in his ships.

We boys were given the choice of being sent home before the mast as ordinary seamen, or else being left to our own devices in San Francisco, which in those days was not exactly an earthly Paradise. I chose the latter course, eventually leaving there for England nine months later, but my life during that time is another story, and has no place in this narrative.

On being paid off, our shipmates bade us good-bye and took their departure, and so ended that adventure, but I cannot refrain from paying my tribute, tardy though it be, to that fine seaman, Wilbur Royle. Had it not been for his initiative, pluck and fine seamanship, the masts would not have been cut away, the boat would not have been launched, and in all probability this story would never have been written. He took his money and tore up his official discharge, as though to show his supreme contempt for all things British, and bade us all "So long, boys"; then, turning to the German mate he addressed him thus: "To hell with you, you white-livered square-head, you are a credit to the flag you sail under," saying which, he expectorated vigorously, as though to rid himself of an unpleasant taste, turned on his heel and walked out of the Consulate, and that was the last I saw of Wilbur Royle, as stout a seaman as ever trod the deck of a ship.

L'ENVOI

THE idea of writing the foregoing was suggested to me by perusing the following cutting from a shipping paper of many years ago : I found it pasted in an old scrap album.

“ —, iron barque, of —, 765 tons register ; owned by Messrs. — & — ; Victoria, British Columbia, for Portland, Oregon, in ballast.

“ Abandoned at sea to the south-westward of Cape Flattery on the —th of —, 18—, and subsequently capsized, two men being drowned. Inquiry held at San Francisco on the —th of —, 18—, before H.B.M. Vice-Consul, President, and Captains — and —, Assessors. The court found that *the ballast was well and properly secured with double shifting boards.* (The italics are mine.) The cause of the casualty was the violence of the weather, which threw the vessel on her beam ends and shifted the ballast. Masts were cut away, but she refused to right. The main hatches got adrift and water entered the hold, and *seeing that she would founder,*¹ the crew, with the exception of two men, left her. These two men perished with the vessel. The court considered the abandonment justifiable, and exonerated the master and officers from blame, the ship appearing to be *well found and manned* (italics mine), *and equipped*, on leaving port, and she was navigated in a seamanlike and proper manner.”

Further comment would be superfluous : the ends of justice (that poor, blindfolded and bemused Goddess) were served, and a firm of rascally ship-owners were enriched by the insurance money, for is it not written that man cannot live by bread alone ?

¹ The vessel did not founder : she was picked up at sea as we left her, and in 1914 was still sailing, under the United States flag.

MR. CASSIDY

“ He was one of those men who are picked up at random in the ports of the world and carry about with them all the signs of manifest failure.”—JOSEPH CONRAD.

IN the year of our Lord, eighteen hundred and ninety odd, I was serving my apprenticeship in a large four-masted barque belonging to Liverpool, and after an ordinary passage from that port we had arrived at Calcutta.

Shortly after our arrival the second mate was paid off, and left us to proceed to his home in Bombay on private affairs, and it was not likely that he would rejoin us. He was a good fellow, and we boys were sorry to lose him, for it was improbable that we should get another second mate in Calcutta as good a ship-mate as he was.

We lay in port for five months discharging and loading, our destination being New York. When the loading was nearing completion there was much speculation in the half-deck as to what kind of man our next second mate would be; our speculations were at an end about a week before we sailed, for it was then that the new second mate joined us, and this was the way of it.

One forenoon, while the usual ship's work was in progress, a dinghy came alongside the gangway ladder, and in this dinghy there was a sahib dressed in the usual white garb of the tropics with a large pith helmet on his head, and accompanied by a sea-chest and canvas bag, the usual personal luggage of a seaman. This individual climbed the gangway

ladder and reached the quarter-deck, from which position he cast a roving eye over the ship. I happened to be at work in the vicinity of the gangway, and being a youngster of an observant nature, I took stock of the newcomer, feeling sure that this must be the new second mate. His appearance at close quarters was not attractive; of medium height and heavy build he looked more like the driver of a brewer's dray than a sailor; his complexion was dark, and he wore a moustache of the Bass's ale type, i.e., that form of face fungus which, when removed from its natural habitat, a pot of ale, is noisily sucked by its owner, and then wiped by hand; better known to-day, thanks to Bruce Bairnsfather, as the "Ole Bill" or Walrus type of moustache; his eyes were bloodshot and shifty, an evil-smelling cheroot was in his mouth, and he had all the appearance of having quite recently looked upon the wine when it was red.

This human mistake observed me watching him, so he bawled, in a hoarse croak: "Boy, come here and tell me who you are." I obeyed him and supplied the necessary information, upon which he remarked: "You are one of those silly suckers whose parents pay money to have you made sailors, eh? Well, I guess they're throwing away good money: it's not sailors they ought to make of you, but tailors. Now you listen to me, son: my name is Cassidy, Mr. Cassidy, and I'm the second mate of this ship, and don't you forget it, young fella me lad." Having made these remarks with an Irish-American accent, Mr. Cassidy, second mate, proceeded to spread himself; looking around with bleary eyes, he caught sight of the coolies who had carried his luggage on board: he tossed them some coins and told them, in a mixture of English and Hindustani profanity, to clear out of his sight, accentuating his remarks with kicks. He then announced his arrival on board in what appeared to me to be a truly original manner, for he delivered himself of the following speech:

“ Well, here I am : my name’s Cassidy and I guess I’m the second mate of this —— —— hooker, and if any lime juice drinking son of a —— aboard here thinks he can fight, now’s his chance, and he’d better dig right in, for I’m Cassidy, and don’t forget it.”

Having issued this challenge and so introduced himself to all and sundry, Mr. Cassidy glared truculently around the decks, spat out his cheroot with unnecessary violence, and awaited events. The loud and defiant voice of the man had attracted several of the crew, who drew near, pretending to be busy, but obviously listening to Mr. Cassidy’s outburst with mingled wonder and amusement, for among them were two or three men who would have willingly accepted the challenge of the redoubtable Mr. Cassidy had discipline permitted, for despite assertions to the contrary, the sense of discipline among merchant seamen is, or rather was, such, that a man will not raise his hand to an officer save under great provocation. However, Nemesis awaited Mr. Cassidy, and from a quarter quite unexpected.

During the inaugural address of that violent and profane seaman, the chief mate of the ship had been walking to and fro athwartships under the break of the poop, smoking his pipe and quietly taking in the proceedings. He was a big man, and quiet, and belonged to that part of the world whose inhabitants are generally referred to as “ bluenosers,” that is to say, he was a Nova Scotia man ; he rarely displayed any violent emotion, and took life easily, but he evidently thought that this was an occasion for asserting himself. Knocking the ashes from his pipe and putting it in his pocket, he approached Mr. Cassidy, looked that seafaring ruffian up and down, and then quietly remarked : “ My name is Mackenzie, and I’m the mate of this ship : I heard your opening remarks, and let me tell you that there are two or three men forrad who would, if discipline

permitted, be quite willing to take up your challenge, but as I, too, belong to this ship, I must necessarily be included among the lime juice drinking sons of —— you mentioned just now, so when I've finished with you, I will give the men the opportunity of having a smack at you; put up your hands, you foul-mouthed stiff," saying which, the mate felled Mr. Cassidy to the deck with one good blow on the jaw.

When he rose to his feet, he made a mad rush at the mate, but that man of the sea was far too good for such as Cassidy, and gave that pugnacious second mate what is usually referred to as a damned good hiding, after which the truculence of Mr. Cassidy departed from him, and was no more; he staggered away to his cabin, there, no doubt, to brood over his wrongs.

Strange to relate, Mr. Cassidy remained in the ship despite his reception at the hands of the mate, but no more was heard of his fighting ability, and he proved to be as poor a seaman as he was a fighter.

I was in Mr. Cassidy's watch on the passage to New York, and had opportunities of observing him, for, young as I was then, I was interested in human nature; I soon concluded that Mr. Cassidy was devoid of all sense of duty, and had long since abandoned all hope of advancement, hence his extraordinary conduct. In the steady-blowing trade winds, when neither yard nor sail, tack nor sheet, require to be touched for weeks, save for an occasional "tautening pull," our new second mate would, when he had the middle watch (midnight to four a.m.), disappear shortly after taking charge of the deck, and reappear about three-thirty a.m., knowing well that the captain was not likely to come on deck during that watch, unless something unusual required his presence.

This unusual behaviour on the part of a responsible officer surprised me, so I determined to investigate, and discover, if I could, where this

strange second mate spent his time when he should have been on the poop looking after the ship; I soon discovered that he was in the habit of keeping his watch on deck asleep on the settee in his cabin, leaving the ship to look after herself, presumably.

This was too much for even my youthful sense of duty to tolerate, so I reported the matter to the mate, leaving him to act as he thought fit. After listening gravely to what I had to say, he gave me instructions to say nothing about the matter, but to call him the next time that the second mate was absent from his place of duty during the middle watch.

The next time that Mr. Cassidy disappeared from the deck, I gave him sufficient time to get to sleep comfortably, and then I called the mate; he came on deck, looked around and paced up and down the poop for a while, then sent me down to call the captain and request him to come on deck. He soon appeared, clad in pyjamas, and had a quiet talk with the mate; then he ordered me to go below and call the second mate and say that he was wanted on deck. I went to his cabin and awakened him, giving him the captain's message; he went on deck and appeared before the captain, and never have I seen such a look of surprise on a man's face as was on the face of Mr. Cassidy: he had the appearance of a thief caught in the act; what the captain said to him, I know not, but obviously, "he hadn't a feather left to fly with."

The end of the story is that for the remainder of that passage to New York the second mate kept his middle watch on deck, and not in his cabin asleep, and on arrival at our destination he had left the ship, leaving his wages behind him, before even the crimps had lured the crew away, and New York crimps did not waste time in those days—it was far too valuable to them.

Mr. Cassidy was one of those ocean Ishmaels who wander from ship to ship, never completing an entire voyage in any one of them: they claim no particular

country, but are occasionally heard to condemn, in profane language, everything British, and to extol all things American; beyond that they rarely commit themselves.

They have no apparent home in any part of the world, no known relatives, no particular virtues, and no great vices; they are never seen writing a letter, nor are they known to ever receive one. Their present ship is their only home, and in it they live their own lives in an atmosphere peculiar to themselves, performing their duties in a perfunctory manner, and seeking no man's friendship. What may be the ultimate fate of these sea vagabonds is as obscure as that which surrounds the later years of the disciples of Rahab.

JOSEPH CONRAD: A SEAMAN'S TRIBUTE

"Let us now praise famous men—
Men of little showing—
For their work continueth,
And their work continueth,
Broad and deep continueth,
Greater than their knowing! "
—KIPLING.

I AM fully conscious of my presumption when I take up my pen to pay my humble tribute to so great a literary star as the subject of this article, but "out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh," and the writings of Joseph Conrad have given me so much joy during my leisure hours at sea and on shore, that I, a brother seaman, have the temerity to express that joy, praying that my boldness may be pardoned.

Few seamen are bookmen: fewer still are makers of books, hence this essay by one who, throughout his years of wandering to and fro in the earth, has ever striven to

"Conquer the severe ascent
Of high Parnassus."

In striving after this conquest I have read many reviews and critiques of the writings of Joseph Conrad by men eminent in the world of letters, but so far I have not seen any tribute paid to him by one of his own craft, which is further excuse for my assurance.

It is not my purpose to criticize the writings of Conrad: that would indeed be presumption on my

part, and defeat the object of this article, which is to take each of Conrad's books of the sea and the men of the sea, indulge in a friendly chat about them and state why it is that I, a seaman, am so staunch an admirer of his, hoping that my effort may be the means of introducing to my brother seamen the beauties of the writing of one of their own craft, and I am forced to admit that among men of the sea the name of Joseph Conrad is not well known.

It gave me much pleasure to read in a book called "Shandy-gaff" by Christopher Morley, an American writer whose books give me the impression that he is a friend of sailormen, the following tribute to Joseph Conrad: "I used to lug volumes of Joseph Conrad down to the West Street piers to give them to the captains and first mates of liners, and get them to talk about ways of the sea. That was how I met Captain Claret of the *Minnehaha*,¹ that prince of seamen; and Mr. Pape of the *Orduna*, Mr. Jones of the *Lusitania*, and many another. There were five volumes of Conrad in the officers' cabins of the *Lusitania* when she went down, God rest her. I know, because I put them there."

After that, I think that we seamen owe Mr. Morley a debt of gratitude for his self-imposed mission: for my part, he preaches to the converted.

Conrad's first book was "Almayer's Folly," which appeared in the year 1895; its writing had occupied his spare time at sea and on shore for some five years, and to quote his own words: "For many years Almayer and the world of his story had been the companions of my imagination without, I hope, impairing my abilities to deal with the realities of sea life." Conrad has told us that if "Almayer's Folly" had been rejected he would never have written another book.

My first acquaintance with the writings of Conrad was made about the year 1900, and the book was

¹ Torpedoed during the war (my footnote).

“The Nigger of the *Narcissus*”; from that time to the present I have ever been on the look out for a new Conrad. I recollect very clearly the reading of that book and the impression that it made upon me; I was at the time serving as chief mate of a tramp steamer engaged in the East Indian trade, and I purchased my copy in Calcutta during a hunt for books among the bookstalls of the New Market.

After reading it myself I passed it on to my ship-mates for perusal, but it failed to arouse any enthusiasm among them, which bears out my statement that seamen are not bookmen, generally speaking. *Tit-Bits*, *Answers* and the works of Johnnie Walker seem to interest them far more than the works of Joseph Conrad, which is to be deplored.

My next book was “*Almayer's Folly*,” and it impressed me even more than did “*The Nigger of the Narcissus*”; I was still in the same old tramp steamer trading in Eastern waters, and I suppose that the setting and environment in which I read that book were in a measure responsible for the influence which it had upon me at the time. I could picture mentally that Eastern river with its pestilential breath and decaying life, the spirit of which seemed to have entered the souls of the dwellers on its banks—Almayer, that poor slave of hope, with his dreams of vast wealth awaiting him in the interior: his daughter, Nina, the light of his life, who abandoned him in his age at the instigation of her Malay mother and left him to die, a broken man: Dain Maroola, Nina's lover: the one-eyed Prime Minister of Sambir, Babalatchi, with his love of intrigue and hatred of the white man, and the rest of those people who live and love and intrigue in one of the fetid backwaters of the earth—it is a sinister story of betrayed hopes and broken lives marching to their predestined end, and its effect upon the reader is depressing.

After “*Almayer's Folly*” came, in 1896, “*An Outcast of the Islands*,” which is referred to by

Harold Williams in his book "Modern English Writers," as a continuation of the story of Almayer; this is surely an oversight, for "An Outcast of the Islands" treats of a period in the career of Almayer some fifteen or more years anterior to "Almayer's Folly"; Almayer himself is yet a young man, and his daughter, Nina, but a small child of four or five. This is another story of Sambir and the Pantai River, and most of the characters of "Almayer's Folly" are introduced; it is a sombre tale of intrigue and passion and tragedy is its end.

To my mind it seems a pity that "Almayer's Folly" should have preceded this book, and for the benefit of those who have not yet read Conrad, I advise them to read "An Outcast of the Islands" before reading "Almayer's Folly."

Conrad's third book was "The Nigger of the *Narcissus*," already referred to in this article. It was accepted by W. E. Henley for publication in *The New Review* in 1897, and the following inscription in a copy of that book in Conrad's handwriting will, I feel sure, be of interest:

"This is the novel which the late W. E. Henley accepted for serial in *The New Review* on the strength of the first two chapters, with the remarks to S. S. Pawling,¹ 'Tell Conrad that if the rest is up to sample it shall certainly go into *New Review*.'"

JOSEPH CONRAD.

"By these pages I stand or fall."

"The Nigger of the *Narcissus*" is indeed a book of the sea, a book written by a sailor, of sailors; Conrad himself has told us in "A Personal Record" that he "has tried with an almost filial regard, to render the vibration of life in the great world of waters, in the hearts of the simple men who for ages have traversed its solitudes, and also that something

¹ Of the firm of Heinemann & Co., London.

sentient which seems to dwell in ships—the creatures of their hands and the objects of their care.”

The characters depicted in this book are such as must surely appeal to sailormen, for have we not all at some period of our careers, in sailing ships in years gone by, met these same men? The whey-faced, despicable, misbegotten offspring of vice, Donkin; we all know the type and have been put to much trouble by creatures such as he; to take a slight liberty with Shakespeare :

“ All the water in the ocean,
Can never turn their mean, black souls to white
Although they lave them hourly in the flood.”

Then there is that fine old son of the sea, Singleton, whose soul is as white as Donkin's is black; he is one of a rapidly disappearing class of men who lived and had their being in the forecastles of sailing ships, and when they died no man knew the time and the place of their death. I have in mind as I write just such another old sea dog with whom I sailed some years ago: he claimed to be more than seventy years of age when I sailed with him, and when questioned of his early days at sea, he would reply: “Aye, my son, when I first went to sea we had wooden ships and iron men to man 'em, but now we have iron ships and wooden men to man 'em”; such was the opinion of an old sea dog of the men of a quarter of a century ago; I wonder what his opinion would be of the present-day sailormen?

The Nigger of the *Narcissus*, James Wait, was a curious and unusual type of seafaring man, whom Conrad, in his masterly style has drawn for us; he was, in the phraseology of the sea, a salt water impostor who by sheer force of personality dominated the simple minds of his shipmates, with the one exception of the loathsome Donkin, who cultivated his society in order to rob him in his hour of need. I cannot refrain from quoting Conrad's description of these two characters, both of them most forceful:

“ He held his head up in the glare of the lamp—a head vigorously modelled into deep shadows and shining lights—a head powerful and misshapen with a tormented and flattened face—a face pathetic and brutal: the tragic, the mysterious, the repulsive mask of a nigger’s soul.”

“ He stood with arms akimbo, a little fellow with white eyelashes. He looked as if he had known all the degradations and all the furies. He looked as if he had been cuffed, kicked, rolled in the mud; he looked as if he had been scratched, spat upon, pelted with unmentionable filth . . . and he smiled with a sense of security at the faces around. His ears were bending down under the weight of his battered hard hat. The torn tails of his black coat flapped in fringes about the calves of his legs. He unbuttoned the only two buttons that remained and everyone saw that he had no shirt under it. It was his deserved misfortune that those rags which nobody could possibly be supposed to own looked on him as if they had been stolen. His neck was long and thin: his eyelids were red: rare hairs hung about his jaws: his shoulders were peaked and drooped like the broken wings of a bird: all his left side was caked with mud which showed that he had lately slept in a wet ditch . . . a startling visitor from a world of nightmares.”

The latter is a long excerpt to quote, I know, but as a description of a human mistake, it cannot be equalled throughout the range of modern English literature, and that must be my excuse for reproducing it here.

“ Lord Jim ” is another tale of the sea and the East, in which we are introduced to Conrad’s *alter ego*, Captain Marlow, and become acquainted with Conrad’s somewhat involved method of narration, a method he continues to use in other of his books, and which has been the subject of much discussion among the critics. Dr. Havelock Ellis, discussing the art of

Joseph Conrad in "The Nation," some time ago, offered a tentative explanation of this involved method, which I will take the liberty of quoting :

" This oblique method of narration—oblique not only through the frequent intervention of Mr. Conrad's *alter ego*, Captain Marlow, but by the line of its direction, may well be a method that comes easily to a sailor; for the sailor, in the perpetual adjustment of his aim to the wind's aim, is familiar with the method of progression by slanting awry towards the goal he desires to reach."

The above explanation appears to me, as a seaman, to adequately interpret Conrad's method of narrative, and it is to be borne in mind that Havelock Ellis, although a distinguished medical man, has also spent much of his early life at sea in sailing ships, and is therefore better able to judge of Conrad and his writings from the point of view of a seaman.

" Lord Jim " has been called the most elaborate of Conrad's studies of character; it relates the adventures of a young English merchant service officer, who, while serving in the pilgrim-carrying steamship *Patna*, commits an inexplicable act of cowardice, the consequences of which affect his whole future life. It is a story of remorse and effort to regain self-respect; throughout his strange wanderings in the backwaters of the earth after the accident to the steamship *Patna*, Jim is pursued by some real or imaginary evidence of his egregious folly: his conscience reproaches and torments him throughout his sojourn in far Patusan, where he is virtually the ruler of a savage people, and in the end he atones to himself by voluntarily seeking death at the hands of the old savage, Doramin. To quote the author, " And that is the end. He passes away under a cloud, inscrutable at heart, forgotten, unforgiven, and excessively romantic."

Such a character could only have existed in the imagination of a profound student of humanity and a great artist. In all probability Lord Jim was not altogether a product of Conrad's imagination, for it is quite within the bounds of possibility that he was drawn more or less from life, for strange things happen in ships and among those who go down to the sea.

In this tragic tale of a young man's folly will be found one of the supreme examples of prose poetry in the English language, the description of a tropical night in the Arabian Sea as seen from the deck of the steamship *Patna*, a steamer "as old as the hills, lean like a greyhound, and eaten up with rust worse than a condemned water tank." It is a perfect sea nocturne and I make no apology for quoting it in an article intended to express great admiration for the works of Conrad :

"The thin gold shaving of the moon floating slowly downwards had lost itself on the darkened surface of the waters, and the eternity beyond the sky seemed to come down nearer to the earth, with the augmented glitter of the stars, with the more profound sombreness in the lustre of the half-transparent dome covering the flat disc of an opaque sea. The ship moved so smoothly that her onward motion was imperceptible to the sense of men, as though she had been a crowded planet speeding through the dark spaces of ether behind the swarm of suns, in the appalling and calm solitudes awaiting the breath of future creations."

The reading of such a perfect prose poem is like listening to the rendering of one of Chopin's nocturnes by Pachmann. Conrad conveys in words what Chopin conveys in music : greater tribute I cannot offer.

I now come to one of the shorter tales of the sea :

"Typhoon," first published in 1903 in a volume containing three other stories, but since published separately. "Typhoon" is not so much a story as a study of character, and a vivid description of a steamship in a typhoon, one of those devastating meteorological disturbances of the China Seas.

The steamship *Nan-Shan*, native owned, is carrying coolies from one Chinese port to another, and on the passage she encounters a typhoon, which should have been avoided had her skipper possessed an elementary knowledge of the laws governing the movements of such disturbances. Captain MacWhirr, the skipper in question, was, as I take it Conrad intended him to be, a type of shipmaster with whom we seamen have been familiar; he was stupid, dull-witted and obstinate, doing what he considered his duty so far as his limited intelligence permitted him. He faces fearlessly and with endurance the fury of the storm, but scorns the advice of text books, which he dismisses with these words :

" . . . You don't find everything in books. All these rules for dodging breezes and circumventing the winds of heaven, Mr. Jukes, seem to me the maddest thing, when you come to look at it sensibly."

And that remark to his chief mate illustrates the mind of Captain MacWhirr. I have in mind as I write these words a shipmaster similar to that excellent seaman, and it was my undeserved misfortune to sail with him and go through a similar experience to that of the steamship *Nan-Shan*, which resulted in the ship being badly damaged, and I can say of him what Mr. Jukes said of Captain MacWhirr : "I think he got out of it very well for such a stupid man."

In "Typhoon" Conrad describes the shifting of the wind in a manner which could not be done by one who had not actually experienced it, and he does so in language which is classical :

“ It was something formidable and swift, like the sudden smashing of a vial of wrath. It seemed to explode all round the ship with an overpowering concussion and a rush of great waters, as if an immense dam had been blown up to windward. In an instant the men lost touch of each other. This is the disintegrating power of a great wind; it isolates one from one's kind. An earthquake, a landslip, an avalanche, overtake a man incidentally, as it were—without passion. A furious gale attacks him like a personal enemy, tries to grasp his limbs, fastens upon his mind, seeks to rout his very spirit out of him. . . . The gale howled and scuffled about gigantically in the darkness, as though the entire world were one black gully. At certain moments the air streamed against the ship as if sucked through a tunnel with a concentrated solid force of impact that seemed to lift her clean out of the water and keep her up for an instant with only a quiver running through her from end to end.”

“ The Shadow Line ” is another tale of the sea : Conrad calls it a confession, and to me it appears to be based upon an episode in his own career ; perhaps I am wrong, but it gives me that impression.¹ It relates the experiences of a young chief mate of an Eastern coasting steamer, who, for no tangible reason, throws up his billet in “ that inconsequential manner in which a bird flies away from a comfortable branch,” as Conrad expresses it, and intending to return to England, he is offered the command of a sailing ship whose captain has died at sea.

He accepts the berth and travels to Bangkok to join the ship. On arrival the chief mate, Mr. Burns, describes the former captain and the manner of his death, and I cannot improve upon his description of the defunct mariner, who was obviously insane.

¹ Conrad informed me later that my surmise was correct.

“ He was a peculiar man—of about sixty-five—iron grey, hard-faced, obstinate and uncommunicative. He used to keep the ship loafing at sea for inscrutable reasons. Would come on deck at night sometimes, take some sail off her, God only knows why, or wherefore, then go below, shut himself up in his cabin, and play on the violin for hours—till daybreak perhaps. In fact, he spent most of his time, day or night, playing the violin. That was when the fit took him. Very loud, too.”

When Mr. Burns, the mate, and the second mate, remonstrated with him about his noise keeping them awake, and so unfitting them for keeping their watch in an efficient manner, the reply of that stern man was that if they did not like the noise, they were welcome to pack up their traps and walk over the side. When this alternative was offered the ship happened to be six hundred miles from the nearest land.

The last speech of the late captain to his chief mate was in the manner of King David's speech on his deathbed in the matter of Joab, and was as follows :

“ The old man gave him a look of savage spite, and said these atrocious words in deadly, slow tones : ‘ If I had my wish, neither the ship nor any of you would ever reach port. And I hope you won't.’ ”

The ship eventually sails from Bangkok with the mate suffering with fever : the crew one by one succumb to it with the exception of the captain and the steward, Ransome, and after vainly striving to continue the voyage the ship has to put in to Singapore, her crew of silent, fever-stricken spectres unable to carry on, and the captain and the steward thoroughly exhausted. The story of this haunted ship ends here, and we leave her fever-stricken crew to recover in hospital, hoping earnestly that she eventually reaches home safely.

The next work of Conrad's that occurs to me is

what is undoubtedly his most intimate book, even more so than "A Personal Record": I refer to "The Mirror of the Sea," which was first published in 1906. It is not a novel, neither is it a story: it consists of a number of chapters of incidents in the life of a seaman, and that seaman is Conrad. He discourses on land-falls and departures, the phraseology of the sea, missing and overdue ships, and many another subject connected with a seaman's life.

The sea has obviously had the most powerful influence on Conrad's life: his devotion to it is for ever manifesting itself throughout his writings, which it permeates like a subtle essence. Has he not left it on record that "the true peace of God begins at any spot a thousand miles from the nearest land?" (in "The Nigger of the *Narcissus*"), and we who love the sea know that he is right; and again, in "Chance," he says "... the blue sea, the sure, the inaccessible, the uncontaminated and spacious refuge for wounded souls."

Conrad is supreme when he writes of that "mother and lover of men, the sea"; no other author, living or dead, has surpassed him in that subject. In "A Personal Record" he tells us of himself:

"Having matured in the surroundings and under the special conditions of sea life, I have a special piety towards that form of my past; for its impressions were vivid, its appeal direct, its demands such as could be responded to with the natural elation of youth and strength equal to the call. . . . I may safely say that through the blind force of circumstances the sea was to be all my world and the merchant service my only home for a long succession of years."²

For the benefit of those readers who are interested I should like to tell them that the ship Conrad speaks of in Chapter XI, and in which he was himself

serving, was the *Loch Etive*, of Glasgow, and her commander was Captain William Stuart, formerly in command of the famous clipper ship *Tweed*, belonging to John Willis, of London.

In the chapter entitled "Initiation" we once more read of Conrad's knowledge and love of ships, and to those of us who have done our business in great waters and known such ships as Conrad describes, this chapter revives old memories and sends a thrill through us such as is unknown in present-day sea life.

"Ships!" exclaimed an elderly seaman in clean shore togs, "Ships"—and his keen glance, turning away from my face, ran along the vista of magnificent figure heads that in the late 'seventies used to overhang in a serried rank the muddy pavement by the side of the New South Dock—"ships are all right: it's the men in 'em."

"Fifty hulls at least, moulded on lines of beauty and speed—hulls of wood, or iron, expressing in their forms the highest achievement of modern ship-building—lay moored all in a row, stem to quay, as if assembled there for an exhibition, not of a great industry, but of a great art. Their colours were grey, black, dark green with a narrow strip of yellow moulding defining their sheer, or with a row of painted ports decking in warlike decoration the robust flanks of cargo carriers that would know no triumph but of speed in carrying a burden, no glory other than of long service, no victory but that of an endless, obscure contest with the sea."

And the latter words would very aptly describe the lives of the seamen who manned them.

Before bringing to a close this chat about "The Mirror of the Sea" I should like to point out that Conrad's novel, "The Arrow of Gold," is foreshadowed in Chapters XL to XLV of that book, under the title of "The Tremolino." There we find a bare outline of the plot of that novel in the

reference to the attempt of Don Carlos of Bourbon to seize the throne of Spain, and many of the characters connected with that plot are introduced, including that gallant North Carolinian, J.M.K.B., otherwise Captain Blunt, *Americain, catholique et gentilhomme*, who lived by his sword.

We also make the acquaintance of the fascinating Doña Rita, and her uncle, the curé of a small mountain parish in Guipuzcoa, from the hills of which province Don Carlos actually made his attempt for the throne of Spain. And there is the faithful Dominic, padrone of the swift balancelle Tremolino and his mistress, Madame Leonore, the proprietress of the sailor's café on the quay at Marseilles; as "The Mirror of the Sea" is admittedly biographical, one is justified in assuming that the incidents and characters in "The Arrow of Gold" are drawn from life, and I am presumptuous enough to suppose that the shadowy Captain George is Conrad himself.

The period of "The Arrow of Gold" is that of the eighteen seventies: that being so, why do the publishers of the English edition disfigure the book by wrapping it in a cover with a design which is, to say the least, inartistic, depicting as it does the Doña Rita and Captain George in the more or less conventional garb of the present day?

"A Personal Record" is a book of memories in which we obtain glimpses of the real Conrad: it is written in the form of reminiscent biography, and both it and "The Mirror of the Sea" should be read as an introduction to Conrad's novels and tales. In it we are told of the wanderings up and down the earth of the manuscript of his first novel, "Almayer's Folly"; and of how it accompanied him to the Stanley Falls, to Geneva and to his home in Poland; of how it was nearly lost in the railway station at Berlin, of its voyage to Australia in the good ship *Torrens*, of which ship Conrad was first mate, and its reading by a passenger in that ship, a young

Cambridge man voyaging for his health, who was his first reader.¹ Then later of how he wrote the tenth chapter of that book on board the steamship *Adowa* while lying alongside a quay in Rouen, the opening words of which are :

“ ‘ It has set at last,’ said Nina to her mother, pointing to the hills behind which the sun had sunk ” —and then Conrad tells us that the sun of his sea-going was setting too, even as he wrote those words, and in that phrase is expressed all his passionate love for the sea and his sorrowful regret that he was so soon to abandon it for ever.

There is in this book of reminiscences the never-to-be-forgotten anecdote of Conrad’s great-uncle, Nicholas B., an officer of the *grande armée* of Napoleon, who, during the retreat from Moscow, was compelled to eat dog !

At the end of “ A Personal Record ” Conrad describes to us his feelings when he first touched the side of an English ship : that vessel was the steamship *James Westoll*, and as she was approaching the harbour of Marseilles she hoisted her colours, and the memory of that sight has moved Conrad to salute that flag in these sonorous words :

“ The Red Ensign ! In the pellucid, colourless atmosphere bathing the drab and grey masses of that southern land, the livid islets, the sea of pale glassy blue under the pale glassy sky of that cold sunrise, it was as far as the eye could reach the only spot of ardent colour—flame-like, intense, and presently as minute as the tiny red spark the concentrated reflection of a great fire kindles in the clear heart of a globe of crystal. The Red Ensign—the symbolic, protecting warm bit of bunting flung wide upon the seas, and destined for so many years to be the only roof over my head.”

¹ It was in this ship that Conrad made the acquaintance of John Galsworthy.

"Chance," published in 1914, is considered by some critics to be Conrad's most finished book; with this opinion I can neither agree or disagree, for the reason that I do not consider myself competent to say what constitutes a finished book: that may be left to the critics to wrangle about. To me "Chance" is a book of the sea written by a seaman and an artist, and it is my purpose here to point out some of its more striking passages, and to remark upon various incidents that interest me.

The book is written in what is now termed Conrad's involved style of narrative; that is to say, his familiar spirit, Marlow, relates part of the story as told to him by Powell, at one time the second mate of the ship *Ferndale*. I have remarked elsewhere in this article on this style of Conrad's, so it is unnecessary to repeat myself.

The story concerns two people, Flora de Barral, the daughter of a once famous (also fraudulent) financier, and Captain Anthony, son of a poet and master of the ship *Ferndale*. In Hugh Walpole's monograph on Joseph Conrad I regret to read his description of Captain Anthony as "a taciturn, elderly sea captain": taciturn, perhaps, but surely not elderly at one and thirty years of age, which is his age according to the book!

The conversation between Marlow and Powell in the riverside inn, at the beginning of the book, must surely be of interest to sailormen, for it expresses what most of us feel, I think:

"They kept up a lively exchange of reminiscences while I listened. They agreed that the happiest time of their lives was as youngsters in good ships, with no care in the world but not to lose a watch below when at sea, and not a moment's time in going ashore after work hours when in harbour. They agreed also as to the proudest moment they had known in that calling which is never embraced on rational and

practical grounds, because of the glamour of its romantic associations. It was the moment when they had passed successfully their first examination and left the seamanship examiner with the little precious slip of blue paper in their hands."

That passage will remind sailormen of that period of their lives when, as old Samuel Johnson expresses it, they were "towering in the confidence of twenty-one," and with the brand-new second mate's certificate in their pocket, they set out to improve the nautical world with their knowledge. *Eheu! fugaces labuntur anni.*

Captain R——, the most dreaded of the three seamanship examiners of the port of London, whom Conrad refers to, will be recognized by many seamen who passed their examinations in London twenty to thirty years ago: I passed my examination for a master mariner before that redoubtable seaman, hence my recognition of him.

In the creation of a character like the fraudulent financier, de Barral, who appears to have been drawn from Jabez Balfour, Conrad indulges his scorn for the world of trade and commerce, a scorn which is expressed throughout his writings: to mention a few instances we find, in addition to de Barral, the suave, pushful ship-chandler, Jacobus, in "A Smile of Fortune"; the little episode of the cheap lock on a cabin door in the *Nan-Shan* in "Typhoon"; in Mr. Cloete in "The Partner," a typical shipmonger of whom the commercial world has produced many examples. I quote a few examples of this scorn taken from "Chance":

"If we at sea went about our work as people ashore high and low go about theirs we should never make a living. No one would employ us. And moreover, no ship navigated and sailed in the happy-go-lucky manner people conduct their business on shore would ever arrive into port."

"Surely you and she must have had enough of shore people and their confounded half and half ways to last you both for a lifetime. A particularly merciful lot they are, too."

"Of course he's a gentleman. One can see that. And that makes it worse. What does a silly sailor know of business? Nothing. No conception."

And there we have the opinion of the average man of business of the men of the sea, and the seaman's opinion of "the shore gang" expressed briefly.

"The Anarchist," one of Conrad's short stories, contains the following expression of opinion, which indicates quite clearly the author's views of such methods of trade :

"Being myself animated by feelings of affection toward my fellow men, I am saddened by the modern system of advertising. Whatever evidence it offers of enterprise, ingenuity, impudence, and resource in certain individuals, it proves to my mind the wide prevalence of that form of mental degradation which is called gullibility."

Captain Roderick Anthony pervades "Chance," but he is a shadowy personality whom we only know at second hand, as it were, through the medium of his whilom second mate, Mr. Powell, and one regrets not being permitted to know more intimately so noble a character. The brief account of his death is given in Conrad's most stately manner :

"I saw tears, a shower of them, fall down Mr. Powell's face. His voice broke.

" 'The *Ferndale* went down like a stone and Captain Anthony went down with her, the finest man's soul that ever left a sailor's body.' "

That is the tribute paid by one seaman to the

memory of a dead brother of the sea : nothing could be finer or more expressive.

One more book of Conrad's which is exclusively of the sea—"The Rescue: A Romance of the Shallows." It is the story of a yacht cast away on one of the numerous reefs of the Malay Archipelago, and is another profound study of human temperament set in the sombre atmosphere of his earlier Malay books. In it we see how deep was Conrad's knowledge of feminine psychology, for in Mrs. Travers he creates for us a character differing entirely from his other women, but to me at least, natural and true to her type, and dignified throughout the vicissitudes which beset her. Captain Tom Lingard and his brig *Lightning* will appeal to all seamen, and I cannot refrain from quoting the following words describing his love for the brig :

"To him she was as full of life as the great world. He felt her live in every motion, in every roll, in every sway of her tapering masts, of those masts whose painted trucks move for ever, to a seaman's eye, against the clouds or against the stars. To him she was always precious—like old love; always desirable—like a strange woman; always tender—like a mother; always faithful—like the favourite daughter of a man's heart."

With "The Rescue" I come to the end of Conrad's books of the sea; there remain his short stories, of which I will take the volume entitled "Twixt Land and Sea," to commence with. This volume contains three tales, the first of which is "A Smile of Fortune," and it relates an episode in the life of a young shipmaster while his ship is lying in a port of the Island of Reunion.

It is a wonderful study of atmosphere, that thing so difficult to define, so easy to perceive, and of which Conrad was one of the great masters; we meet the

brothers Jacobus, one of them a blustering bully of commerce, the other a suave, avaricious shipchandler, both of them types of men that the sailorman meets in his goings about the world.

In the strange, passionate girl Alice, Conrad again reveals his knowledge of women, a knowledge which some critics deny that he possesses. Alice is indeed a wild, untamed creature as she sits brooding and sulking in the isolation of that tropical garden, neither knowing nor caring anything about herself or the people around her; one of the most incomprehensible of Conrad's women.

There is also the amiable aunt, so picturesquely described :

“ This stumpy old woman with a face like a large wrinkled lemon, beady eyes, and a shock of iron grey hair, was dressed in a garment of some ash coloured, silky, light stuff. It fell from her thick neck down to her toes with the simplicity of an unadorned nightgown. . . . She sat down in a rocking chair some distance away and took up her knitting from a little table. Before she started at it she plunged one of the needles into the mop of her grey hair and stirred it vigorously.”

And then there is the dear old skipper whose ship had lost her figurehead at sea, and his pathetic dismay at such a loss.

“ ‘ Did I know,’ he asked anxiously, ‘ that he had lost the figurehead of his ship; a woman in a blue tunic edged with gold, the face perhaps not so very, very pretty but her bare white arms beautifully shaped and extended as if she were swimming? Did I? Who would have expected such a thing! . . . After twenty years, too! ’

“ ‘ A new figurehead! ’ he scolded in unquenchable indignation. ‘ Why! I’ve been a widower now for eight and twenty years come next May

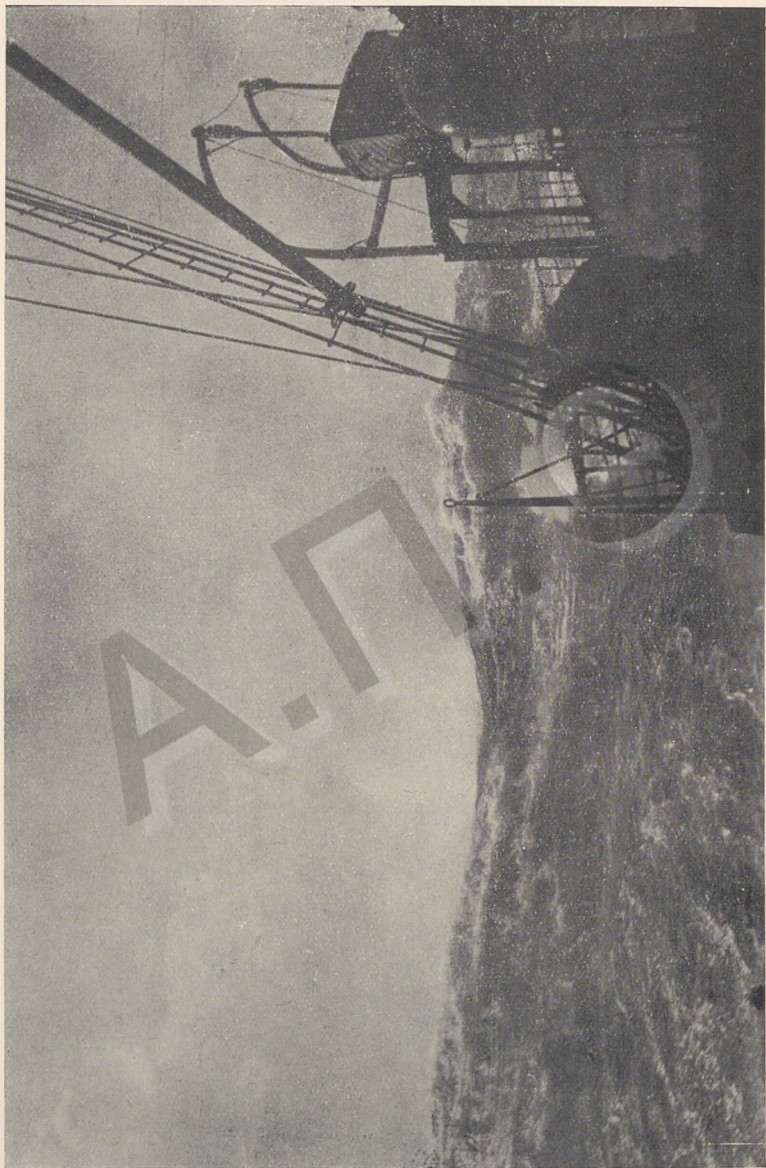
and I would just as soon think of getting a new wife.' ”

“ The Secret Sharer ” is the second story in the book, and it relates an episode which occurred to the master of a sailing ship while lying at anchor at the head of the Gulf of Siam. He rescues from the sea the mate of another ship, over whose head hangs the charge of murder; he hides him in his ship and eventually assists him to escape.

It is a thrilling, exciting story, and reads like a genuine reminiscence. In many respects “ The Secret Sharer ” is like “ The Shadow Line ” and I think that Conrad must have had the same ship in mind when he wrote both stories; the part of the world is the same, the captains are identical, and there is the same atmosphere of whispering suspense throughout the ships of these two tales.

“ The Secret Sharer ” reminds me of an episode with which I am personally acquainted, and I ask forgiveness for repeating it here; it all happened so many years ago that I feel sure that no living persons' feelings will be hurt, even should they recognize themselves.

In my young days I was serving in the East Indian trade, and a brother officer in a fit of passion struck a man who was standing beside an open gangway; he fell overboard and was not seen again, neither was his body recovered. The ship was in harbour at the time and the culprit, thinking discretion to be the better part of valour, left his ship and took passage in another one which was on the eve of sailing; he got away from the place of the occurrence but was apprehended at the next port of call and taken back to the scene of his offence. He was tried on a charge of manslaughter, there was some legal flaw, and he escaped with a sentence of five months' imprisonment, during the serving of which he had quite a good time, according to his account of it, and when he was



AND SWORD LIKE WAS THE SOUND OF THE IRON WIND,
AND LIKE A BREAKING BATTLE WAS THE SEA.

Savinburne.

released he obtained a much better appointment than the one he formerly held.

In relating this long past episode I do not wish it to be inferred that I advocate the killing of a man as the best means by which a young sea officer may advance his professional prospects : the outcome is too uncertain. I merely relate it as bearing on Conrad's story of " The Secret Sharer."

The last story in the volume is " Freya of the Seven Isles," a pathetic and tragic tale of the Malay Archipelago. Four people are concerned ; Jasper Allen, master and owner of the brig *Bonito* ; Captain Neilson (or Nelson) the father of Freya ; Freya Neilson, and the evil, lecherous Dutchman, Heems-kirk, commanding the Dutch gunboat *Neptun*.

The character drawing is perfect, each one standing out clear cut like a cameo. Freya is to my mind one of the most charming women in all Conrad's tales of the sea, a loyal, joyous, absolutely feminine daughter of the sea, whose later conduct I cannot quite reconcile with her nature, unless one postulates a mental breakdown.

Her father, " old Nelson," a retired shipmaster, is a simple-minded, kindly old seaman, imbued with a wholesome dread of the Dutch authorities, who were, in his view, capable of " playing any ugly trick on a man " who had the misfortune to displease them.

Jasper Allen is one of Conrad's fine characters, as noble in his way as is Captain Anthony in " Chance " ; he is a fine seaman of an upright, noble type, whose life is dominated by his passionate love for Freya, and his affection for his ship, the brig *Bonito*.

" The brig's business was on uncivilized coasts, with obscure rajahs dwelling in nearly unknown bays ; with native settlements up mysterious rivers opening their sombre, forest lined estuaries among a welter of pale green reefs and dazzling sand-banks, in lonely straits of calm blue water all aglitter with sunshine.

Alone, far from the beaten tracks, she glided—all white—round dark frowning headlands, stole out, silent like a ghost, from behind points of land stretching out all black in the moonlight; or lay hove-to, like a sleeping sea bird, under the shadow of some nameless mountain waiting for a signal. She would be glimpsed suddenly on misty, squally days dashing disdainfully aside the short aggressive waves of the Java Sea; or be seen far, far away, a tiny dazzling speck flying across the brooding purple masses of thunderclouds piled up on the horizon."

Such passages as this clearly show Conrad's passion for ships and the sea, a passion which pervades his writings, and which appears to me to have grown stronger with the passing of the years; he is indeed a true seaman and loves with all his nature "the light, and sound, and darkness of the sea."

Heemskirk, the Dutch naval officer, is one of Conrad's most poisonous characters; a heartless, pestilential scoundrel with no more mercy in him than there is milk in a male tiger. The thought of so vile a creature fills any man of spirit with a longing to kick him, and kick him hard.

It is a melancholy story which opens with an atmosphere of tropical dawn and closes with the gloom of a stormy tropical night.

"Youth: a Narrative," "Heart of Darkness," "The End of the Tether"—these three stories are contained in one volume, although it is absurd to term "The End of the Tether" a short story, for it is even longer than "Typhoon," which was originally published as one of a volume of short stories, but is now published separately.

"Youth" reads more like a reminiscence than a tale, and is, in effect, a salutation to the magic East. Marlow tells the story which is of his first voyage to the East, in a coal-laden sailing ship which is eventually abandoned at sea on fire, the crew escaping

in the boats. The young officer, Marlow, reaches the East at last in an open boat.

“ And this is how I see the East. I have seen its secret places and have looked into its very soul; but now I see it always from a small boat, a high outline of mountains, blue and afar in the morning; like faint mist at noon; a jagged wall of purple at sunset. I have the feel of the oar in my hand, the vision of a scorching blue sea in my eyes. And I see a bay, a wide bay, smooth as glass and polished like ice, shimmering in the dark. A red light burns far off upon the gloom of the land, and the night is soft and warm. We drag at the oars with aching arms, and suddenly a puff of wind, a puff faint and tepid and laden with strange odours of blossoms, of aromatic wood, comes out of the still night—the first sigh of the East on my face. That I can never forget. It was impalpable and enslaving like a charm, like a whispered promise of mysterious delight.”

The story is one of youth conquering all adversities and the narrator apostrophizes that magic period of life in the following beautiful passage.

“ Oh the glamour of youth! Oh the fire of it, more dazzling than the flames of the burning ship, throwing a magic light on the wide earth, leaping audaciously to the sky, presently to be quenched by time, more cruel, more pitiless, more bitter than the sea—and like the flames of the burning ship, surrounded by an impenetrable night.”

And this is how Marlow, in his later years, thinks of his old ship:

“ O youth! The strength of it, the imagination of it, the faith of it. To me she was not an old rattletrap carting about the world a lot of coal for a freight—to me she was the endeavour, the test, the

trial of life. I think of her with pleasure, with affection, with regret, as you would think of someone dead you have loved. I shall never forget her."

Those of us who are no longer young and who have spent part of our youth in the gorgeous, romantic East, will have experienced just such feelings for those bygone days, those old ships in which we served, although we are unable to express them in the stately language of Conrad.

"Heart of Darkness" also reads like a page from Conrad's early life, for he spent some part of his sea career in the West African trade, and was familiar with the Congo.

Again our old familiar friend Marlow takes up the narrative, and relates his experiences in the interior of Africa when he was in command of a Congo steamer; how he took her up that mighty river into the very heart of the forest primeval, and of his meeting with Mr. Kurtz, the agent of the great Company, a man whose soul has been corrupted by life in the savage wilderness of Africa. This is Conrad's description of the jungle:

"The great wall of vegetation, an exuberant and entangled mass of trunks, branches, leaves, boughs, festoons, motionless in the moonlight, was like a rioting invasion of soundless life, a rolling wave of plants, piled up, crested, ready to topple over the creek, to sweep every little man of us out of his little existence."

That passage could only have been written by one who has known the tropical jungle, one who has been profoundly influenced by the mysterious spirit of the secret places of the earth. I can only call to mind one similar description, and that is in a book by H. M. Tomlinson—"The Sea and the Jungle": in that book it is the jungle of the mighty Amazon.

"The End of the Tether" contains one of

Conrad's finest nautical characters—Captain Whalley. He has been wealthy in his time, and of a soberly joyful nature, but he loses his wife, his only daughter has married and settled in Australia, nearly all his money is lost in a bank smash, and age is overtaking him.

He sells his barque *Fair Maid* and invests the money in shares in an Eastern trading tramp steamer, of which vessel he takes command; in other words the poor old seaman buys his command, a pernicious system by means of which rascally shipmongers enrich themselves at the expense of credulous sailormen, who eagerly accept the lure of a command, part with their hard earned savings, and find themselves thrown out of their berth at the first opportunity, their money lost, and themselves glad to accept a second mate's berth. It is upon such land sharks that Conrad pours his scorn, although I fear that it is lost upon such creatures, for the reason that they are totally incapable of reading literature: the *Financial News* is as high as they rise in that direction.

This grand old man of the sea, Captain Whalley, is in the hands of similar rapacious and unscrupulous rogues and tricksters, one of whom endeavours to make use of the old man's failing sight for his own purpose, the nefarious one of losing the ship in order to obtain the insurance money. Captain Whalley discovers the plot, but too late: the ship is lost and the silent, dignified old seaman, bowed down by the horror of advancing blindness and the lonely desolation of his old age, having indeed reached the end of the tether, deliberately sinks with his ship.

"The End of the Tether" is one of the most pathetic stories that Conrad has written, and it is a story which has a moral for men of the sea who are impatient to obtain command and eager to invest their money in order to achieve that object.

The three stories just dealt with, and also "Typhoon" are considered by those competent to

judge, as four of the finest short stories in the English language.

"Within the Tides" is Conrad's latest volume of short stories: there is one story of the sea, "The Partner," and it is interesting from the point of view of the seaman because it depicts one of those sailors' robbers and devourers of widows' houses who are known as shipmongers. In this story the name of the gentleman is Cloete.

In this tale the narration is left to an elderly, taciturn ruffian with an abnormal thirst, a chance acquaintance in the smoking-room of a seaside resort hotel.

"His appearance was that of an old adventurer, retired after many unholy experiences in the darkest parts of the earth; but I had every reason to believe that he had never been outside England. From a casual remark somebody dropped I gathered that in his early days he must have been somehow connected with shipping—with ships in docks. Of individuality he had plenty. And it was this that attracted my attention at first. But he was not easy to classify, and before the end of the week I gave him up with the vague definition, 'An imposing old ruffian.'

"And this imposing old ruffian, who followed the unromantic calling of master stevedore in the port of London, expressed his opinion of sailors and the sea in this detached and expressive manner:

"'Silly sort of life. No opportunities, no experience, no variety, nothing. Some fine men came out of it, but no more chance in the world if put to it than fly. Kids. So Captain Harry Dunbar. Good sailor. Great name as a skipper. Big man: short side whiskers going grey, fine face, loud voice. A good fellow, but no more up to people's tricks than a baby.'"

Mr. Cloete, "The Partner," in his well-meant

endeavour to get the ship *Sagamore* wrecked, enlists the services of a human mistake whose name is Stafford; this creature was a master mariner, and is described by the "imposing old ruffian" in these words :

" ' The truth was they had kicked him out of a big steamship company for disgraceful conduct ; nothing to affect his certificate, you understand ; and he had gone down quite easily. Liked it, I expect. Anything better than work. Lived on the widow lady who kept that boarding house. '

" ' That's almost incredible, ' I ventured to interrupt. ' A man with a master's certificate, do you mean ? '

" ' I do ; I've known them bus cads, ' he growled, contemptuously. ' Yes, swing on the tail board by the strap and yell : " tuppence all the way. " Through drink. But this Stafford was of another kind. Hell's full of such Staffords. ' "

It is sad to have to admit that the sea does occasionally breed such scum as Stafford, but fortunately the type is rare. The early training under canvas, the hard, rough discipline of the sea, and being brought face to face with the elementary forces of nature from early youth does not tend to the production of many Staffords.

In the end the ship is wrecked and the captain, Harry Dunbar, is murdered by Stafford, who dies a professed loafer in an East End hospital, clamouring for a parson.

The valedictory remark of the master stevedore was : " What makes me sick is to hear these silly boatmen telling people the captain committed suicide. Pah ! Captain Harry was a man that could face his Maker any time up there, and here below, too. He wasn't the sort to slink out of life. Not he ! He was a good man down to the ground. He gave me my

first job as a stevedore only three days after I got married ! ”

There is one more tale of Conrad's which is purely of the sea ; it is a short story entitled “ The Brute : An Indignant Tale.” It is a tragic tale of the sea, telling of the ship *Apse Family*—nicknamed *The Brute*—a ship with an evil reputation, and one in which a man is killed every voyage. The story is told by a man who served in her as third mate and whose elder brother was at the same time chief mate. On that particular voyage there had been no tragedy ; the chief mate becomes engaged to the captain's niece—who was making a voyage in the ship—all goes well on the passage home and it appears as though *The Brute* were going to outlive her evil reputation, but, in the irony of fate, the girl is dragged overboard by the anchor and drowned when the ship is actually in the Thames.

And so I come to the end of my discussion on the sea stories of Joseph Conrad : ships and shipmen appear in other of his tales, notably in “ Victory,” “ Falk,” “ An Outcast of the Islands,” “ The Rover,” and his posthumous book “ Suspense,” but these stories are not exclusively of the sea so I omit them. In doing so I think that I have not omitted to mention any of the major characters of Conrad's sea stories.

The most remarkable thing about the art of Joseph Conrad is that he, a Pole by birth and lineage, who knew little of the English language until he was twenty years of age, should have risen to his present eminence in the world of English literature, an eminence which few of his contemporaries approached.

Sailors were, and for all the evidence I have seen to the contrary, they still are, regarded by society at large as a body of eccentric and scarcely respectable individuals, who roam about the seas of the world in an endeavour to earn what is at its best a precarious livelihood, but with the advent of Joseph Conrad the

reading members of that society are compelled to admit that a good thing has at last come out of Nazareth.

In conclusion I feel that I cannot do better than quote Conrad's own words in reference to the aspiration of the worker in prose :

“ My task which I am trying to achieve is, by the power of the written word, to make you hear, to make you feel—it is, before all, to make you see. That—and no more, and it is everything. If I succeed, you shall find there, according to the need of your hearts : encouragement, consolation, fear, charm—all you demand ; and, perhaps, also that glimpse of truth for which you have forgotten to ask.”

EPITAPH

“ His life was a passionate quest,
He looked down deep in the wells of truth,
And now he is taking his rest.”

EXILED: A FRAGMENT

" To the legion of the lost ones, to the cohort of the damned,
To my brethren in their sorrow overseas."

—KIPLING.

I WONDER how many people realize what it means to be exiled, to be an outcast, a nomad, through no fault of their own, from country, friends, and all that was life? forced to live on an alien shore among people as far removed from them in thought and aspiration as are the stars : with head bloody, maybe, but unbowed, while the tale of the years that the locust has eaten, slowly but surely lengthens.

Those of you who belong to the legion of the lost ones will understand this fragment from life, and will sympathize with a brother in exile, but it is not for you : it is for that larger part of humanity, the placid sea of whose life is rarely disturbed by the waves of unrest.

These tranquil souls will have little sympathy with those of their brethren who compose the cohort of the damned ; they hear that such men exist, but dismiss them from their thoughts, the men with a pitying sneer, the women, from their chaste pedestal of respectability, with lowered eyes and modest demeanour, as though the mention of such outcasts were an affront to their virtue. They all, men and women alike, wrap themselves in a mantle of self-righteousness, thanking their highly respectable God that they are what they are, and so pursue their allotted path through life, cribbed, cabined, and confined in body and intellect.

Now hear the story of one who was afflicted with the curse of Reuben.

Some years ago, it matters not to this tale how many, there lived one who was a mariner. He followed the sea in many ships and made progress in the profession of his choice : all the honours of his calling were his while he was yet young in years. He served for a couple of years as an officer in the British navy, and so added to his experience and his knowledge, and he then joined one of the well-known lines of British steamships, intending to climb the ladder of promotion until command was obtained, but the spirit of unrest came over him ; he became dissatisfied with his prospects, and carried away with the idea that the land of Utopia was crying out for men like himself, he resigned his position, deserted the land of his fathers, and took ship for the fabled land.

He reached his destination in due course, hopeful as the break of day, firmly convinced that he would soon find friends and employment in the fair land to which he had emigrated.

He had not been long in this new land before it began to dawn upon him that he had made a grave mistake in leaving his own country. The land to which he had come was a fair one, and the fruits of the earth were plentiful in it, but this stranger within the gates was not *persona grata*, and he soon discovered that although he spoke the same language, that was the only bond between him and the people of Utopia. He had been brought up to show deference to women ; these people knew it not ; his experience had taught him that sobriety was an asset in life : in this strange Utopian land the drunkard flourished like the young bay tree of Scripture, and the wicked man went his way unreprieved, so that at last this man of the sea came to the conclusion that he had indeed found the fabled land of Samuel Butler.

He applied for employment in various places, but

his services were invariably declined, not always with courtesy; every door was closed to him, and he could not understand this treatment. His credentials were good, he was of presentable appearance and sober habits, but he was not wanted.

Slowly it began to dawn upon him that the educated Englishman was not the type of man required in Utopia: he was in a land suffering under one of the earth's Four Tremendous Curses, that curse of which the godly Agur spake unto Ithiel, and ranked first—the servant when he reigneth. Here then, was the explanation of his unpopularity, and it gave him food for bitter reflection.

Wherever he looked, he saw that the influential men of this land had risen to eminence by the sweat of their brows, or by means of the rickety ladder of politics, and one and all seemed determined to retain their positions at the expense of the weak, the poor, and the foolish among them, ever having before them “The good old rule . . . the simple plan, that they should take who have the power, and they should keep who can.”

This then, was the social fabric with which the exiled one found himself surrounded: it was too late to return to his own country and start life anew, he had burnt his boats and henceforth must be an Ishmael.

After many rebuffs, and with the help of a fellow exile, he obtained a position as a junior mate in a small coasting passenger steamer, but his advent there was regarded with suspicion by his shipmates, presumably because they had heard of his superior qualifications, and feared that he might be promoted over their heads: by which they did their employers a gross injustice.

She was indeed a strange craft, this ship that flew the flag of Utopia, and the exile found himself among a quaint collection of marine curiosities. Of discipline as he knew it, there was none; Jack was as

good as his master, and considered himself better; generally he was, so I was given to understand. Officers and men gambled and drank together on board, and went on shore in company. The nautical exile, being the most junior mate on board, took his meals in the company of the chief and second stewards and the stewardess, which was as it should be in a ship belonging to a country over which the servant reigned.

The captain of this vessel was a strange man of the sea : he was a member of that religious sect to which one John Nelson Darby gave his name, hence his outlook upon life in this vale of tears was somewhat circumscribed; to him all men were erring brothers, brands to be plucked from the burning, where "*the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched,*" an attitude of which his officers took every advantage. This excellent sea captain had been known to conduct revivals at street corners with a certain amount of success, and he had for a friend another master mariner who was an official of the government of Utopia, and whose known hobbies were tin bethels and tracts. He utilized the opportunities afforded by his position to enclose, in the envelope containing official matter for shipmasters, divers tracts, intended, no doubt, to further the good work of salvation.

The chief mate was an alcoholic and incompetent profligate, which attributes, although well known, did not appear to jeopardize his position; the second mate had his good points, but he was of the earth, decidedly earthy. The principal event of his career was his marriage to the daughter of a decent wharf labourer, which was celebrated with *éclat* during the time that the exile was in the ship : I had it from him that he was invited, but did not attend, which I thought a pity, for he would have been able to describe to me something of the domestic life of the seafaring part of the population of Utopia.

The rest of the crew of that ship do not matter, but I was given to understand that the only gentleman among them was the chief steward, and he had a lurid past.

My friend, the exile, remained in that ship six months, then he left her in order to preserve his sanity.

His next experience was in the rôle of a temporary clerk in the civil service of the cheerful country of which he was a resident. This was an illuminating experience, for my friend gained an insight into the working of a government department, and it also put him in possession of the secret of "getting on." This consisted in a sinking of individuality, being obsequious to those above you, and making use of them, when possible, for the purpose of your own advancement, and above all, to regard your fellow-men as a body of unmitigated rascals until such time as you were in possession of indubitable proof to the contrary. This, in brief, was the key to success as my friend understood it, so at the end of six months he shook the dust of that department from his feet, having, under circumstances of much difficulty, managed to retain his self-respect, and no doubt thinking of Henley's magnificent lines :

" Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods there be,
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance,
I have not winced nor cried aloud,
Under the bludgeonings of chance,
My head is bloody, but unbowed."

Having by this time become somewhat surfeited with the kindness and hospitality of the people of Utopia, this obvious human misfit betook himself in a small vessel to China and Japan, where he spent a fairly restful twelve months, his simple

soul preferring the alleged barbarism of those benighted countries to the culture and civilization of Utopia.

Then once more the "wanderlust" seized him in its relentless grip, and he bade farewell to the glittering, fascinating East that he loved so well, and found his way to another land, among whose hospitable people he tarried for some two years, ever restless, ever filled with lingering regret for what might have been.

At last the longing to see familiar places, to hear friendly voices became too strong for him, and he determined to return to the land he had so unwisely and precipitately forsaken many years before, and try his luck there once again, convinced in his own mind that a mangy English dog was preferable to a Utopian lion. For private reasons my friend had to return to the land of Utopia before taking ship to England; and shortly after arriving there the European War burst upon an astonished world, and he found himself once more installed as an officer. The reason for this was that my friend had, through all his vicissitudes, retained his commission as an executive officer of the Royal Naval Reserve, having committed no breach of the regulations which would entail its loss; hence on the outbreak of war he had to report himself for duty to the senior naval officer present, with the result that he was immediately appointed to a responsible position in the land of Utopia.

Here, then, was a turning of the tables indeed : the hitherto scorned and rejected outcast found himself in a position where the purse-proud parvenu tradesmen and hucksters were obliged to knock at his door and ask his pleasure; with the prospect of their homes being bombarded by enemy ships, they were only too anxious to assist a naval officer in the execution of his duties, and doors hitherto slammed in his face without ceremony, were opened at his bidding, and he was

received with outward respect by the great, the wise, and the eminent of the land.

Being possessed of a keen sense of humour, my friend would shake with merriment when recalling the attitude of these sycophants, but, as he was wont to observe, "Above all things, my friend, let us be tolerant : the decencies of life must be preserved even among these Philistines."

After a couple of months in this position, my friend's term of exile ended at last, and he departed from the fair land of Utopia ; the Great War had done for him what he had been unable to do for himself, and the last that I heard of him was that he was filling a responsible position in the navy in one of the areas of war.

I do not think that he is likely to return to Utopia, for even if he be not a sadder man after his experiences, I am sure he is a wiser one, and even now methinks I hear his voice giving utterance to his favourite invocation :

"Rid me and deliver me from the hand of strange children : whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood."

A VOYAGE IN A TORPEDO BOAT

"There be poets in plenty have sang in the praise,
Of the famous old names of Old Navy days;
Of *Victory*, *Temeraire*, *Ajax*, *Orion*,
Colossus, *Calliope*, *Tiger*, and *Lion*,
But it's hard, you'll acknowledge, to rhyme you the fame,
Of a craft that has never so much as a name,
But simply appears on the tale of the sea,
As—H.M. Torpedo Boat (One, Two or Three!)."

—C. FOX SMITH.

EARLY in the late war, I occupied the enviable(?) position of captain of one of the torpedo boats mentioned in the above verse. She was none of your modern oil-burning, fast craft, but was one of those known in the service as a "shovel nose" T.B., a class of vessel built in the 'eighties for harbour defence, and steadily allowed to deteriorate as the years passed, like true "monkey's orphans."

The first three months that I spent in her were in Egyptian waters, patrolling the Bitter Lakes, Suez Canal, and the coast off Port Said, sometimes going as far as El Arish on special service.

It was a monotonous existence, that patrolling outside Port Said, running at slow speed about ten miles to the westward, then back again, and so on for twenty-four or forty-eight hours, then inside the harbour of Port Said for twenty-four hours, taking in coal and water and doing odd jobs which the flagship's picket boat should have done.

Then came orders to coal, water and replenish with stores and ammunition (we carried one fearsome weapon, a 3-pounder Hotchkiss!), and proceed to Mudros with the other boats of the flotilla, under escort of a cruiser.

We left Port Said escorted by a light cruiser and a fleet collier, and all went well for two days, the weather being fine and the sea smooth. On the afternoon of the second day we coaled from the cruiser, stopping under the lee of the island of Stamphalia for the purpose.

At daylight on the third day, when off the Island of Khios, there were indications of a change in the weather, and the wind gradually increased to a gale from the south with a rising sea and sharp rain squalls, but our six small craft managed to keep together, although things were getting uncomfortable on board. The wind and sea steadily increased as we drew away from the Island of Khios, and had there been an experienced seaman in charge of the convoy, he would have anchored under the lee of that island until the weather moderated, instead of forcing such cockle-shells as those old T.B.'s to face such weather as was indicated, with the subsequent loss of one of them. We made very heavy weather of it, and early in the forenoon the steering gear (old and rotten like the craft herself) of my T.B. carried away, and with much difficulty we rigged a temporary affair of rope tackles which took all hands to work, and with this gil-guy we had to steer for a matter of twenty hours. The weather was now worse, the squalls more fierce and frequent, and soon we lost sight of the convoy and were left alone to battle along as best we could.

Strange as it may seem, we left Port Said without the necessary adjuncts to navigation, such as charts, sailing directory, etc., and this despite my protest to the captain of the cruiser, who informed me that he was escorting us, we had only to follow his ship and carry out his orders, but at the same time I could not help wondering what we were supposed to do in the event of separation; however,

“Mine not to make reply,
Mine not to reason why,
Mine but to do or die”;

and after all, what mattered the loss of one or two ancient torpedo boats so long as we won the war?

After passing the Island of Khios the cruiser had signalled a course for us to steer, which I assumed would take us to the entrance to Mudros Harbour, and we endeavoured to steer that course after becoming separated from the rest of the convoy. Subsequent investigation proved that this course was in error.

And so we ran on before the increasing wind and sea, doing our best under the most trying circumstances, until, during the afternoon the collier hove in sight, having been dispatched by the cruiser to investigate the cause of our delay, which, having regard to the state of the weather, was a kindly action! We stated our trouble by signal, and were informed that the course we were steering would not take us near our destination, and were given the correct one, and the collier suggested that we follow him. This suggestion we acted upon, but the new course brought the wind and sea on the quarter, with the result that we were constantly swept by heavy seas, and eventually the engine-room was flooded, so we had to resume our former course and bring the wind and sea astern.

The seas becoming heavier and the weather worse, and our small craft being in danger of foundering, added to which darkness was coming on, I took counsel with the second in command and we decided to abandon the ship, if it were possible. We signalled to the collier our intention, asking him to send a boat: he came as close to us as was possible, made a lee, and lowered a boat which with difficulty reached us, and I gave the order to the men to jump into her as they saw their opportunity, but only two had succeeded in doing so when the painter parted, and the boat was swept astern. This boat eventually reached the collier and the men got safely on board, but the boat was stove in by the heavy seas and was left to her fate.

Our friend the collier, not to be defeated, again closed us, and sent his only remaining boat to our assistance, but so heavy was the sea that she was unable to reach us in even the short distance that we were apart, and was swept astern into the storm and the gathering night, and so both boat and collier were lost to view, and we were left to do our feeble best in a disabled vessel half-full of water.

We kept running at slow speed before wind and sea, it being quite impossible to turn and head it, so heavy was the sea and so small the craft; and so the night wore on, a night of intense darkness and storm. To add to my anxiety, I knew that we were running into danger, as the Island of Lemnos could not, by my rough calculations, be more than twenty miles distant.

All this time, that is from about nine a.m. to midnight, all hands had been without food, and working hard at the improvised steering gear, and in the stoke hold and engine-room. Not a hatch could be opened in order to obtain food: had we done so the heavy seas constantly breaking on board would have flooded the compartment and the ship would have foundered.

Towards one a.m. the weather moderated slightly, and during a lull I heard an ominous sound ahead; straining my eyes I imagined that I could discern land, and the deck of our small craft being so near the water, I knew that if what I thought I could see were land, then it must be very, very near us to be visible in such weather, and so I determined to risk turning the ship round, and so head the sea and away from danger.

Eagerly watching for a lull, it came; the helm was put hard over, the engines to full speed ahead, and round spun the gallant little craft and headed the sea.

Not too soon, for a momentary rift in the clouds gave me a glimpse of a pale, sickly-looking moon, and gazing astern, I clearly saw a long line of white

surf breaking on a high, rocky shore, and heard the roar of it above the fury of the gale.

The poor little craft was now in a position to feel the full power of the sea, with her head to it, and I feared that the strain might prove to be more than the old engines could stand; had anything happened to them, well, this story would not have been written; however, fortune favoured us, and we were able to hold our own, and slowly we increased our distance from the long white line of surf breaking on that inhospitable shore.

To my intense relief, a searchlight was seen to the north-east just about this time, and I naturally came to the conclusion that it was the light of a cruiser sent out to look for us, but as time went on, it did not appear to become any more distinct, and I was puzzled, little thinking at the time that the storm had driven us so far from our course. Subsequent inquiries satisfied me that the land we saw was Kum Kale, the southern entrance to the Dardanelles, and the light which puzzled me by its apparent fixity was the searchlight at the Turkish port of Chanak, well inside the Dardanelles! On first sighting the light, we had burnt Véry lights in the hope of attracting the attention of the supposed cruiser, but of course nothing happened, and there was that tantalizing light flashing its beam across the sky.

Our Véry lights had, however, been seen by some of our vessels off the entrance to the Dardanelles, for in a little time, what appeared in the darkness to be a battleship¹ passed close to us, and flashed her searchlight, at the same time making the challenge to which we were unable to reply except by signalling who we

¹ This was a battleship in which I subsequently served, and on relating my experiences in the torpedo boat, one night after dinner, I was told, amidst much laughter, that I very nearly lost the number of my mess that night, for several guns were trained on the T.B. and fire was only withheld on account of our burning Véry lights, an act that an enemy torpedo boat would be unlikely to indulge in.

were with the aid of a small electric pocket torch, the only apparatus we had left. Apparently satisfied, the battleship took no further notice of us, and disappeared in the darkness, but soon afterwards we were again picked up by a searchlight, this time from one of our destroyers. She came close, and a voice from her hailed us and inquired who we were and what we were doing there. On being informed of our identity and our condition, the destroyer told us to follow him if possible, and he would escort us to an anchorage.

The weather had by this time—about four a.m.—considerably moderated, and we were able to take station astern of our friend and follow him at slow speed, arriving, after four hours' steaming thus, at an anchorage to the north of the Island of Tenedos.

Here were anchored ships of every description, both French and British, from the mighty *Queen Elizabeth* to small craft like ourselves. As soon as we had anchored I repaired on board the parent ship of destroyers, there to make my report to the senior officer—technically known as Captain D. I was informed by that officer that our collier had reported, on arrival at Mudros, that, having lost his only two boats in an endeavour to rescue us, he had no alternative but proceed to his destination, and arrived there, he had reported that he considered it impossible for H.M.T.B. to live through the gale then blowing.

I also learnt that one of the other boats of the flotilla had been lost on the passage, fortunately without loss of life, and all things considered, I was fortunate to be alive to tell the tale. Having made my report, I returned to the ship, and thoroughly weary after the strain of the past twenty-four hours, I lay down on the narrow settee that served me as a bunk and slept the sleep of the weary.

Our misfortunes were not yet at an end, though, for during the afternoon the wind suddenly shifted from south to north, and blew with increased fury :

our anchor dragged, we let go the second one: still we dragged, and having no steam on the engines owing to our coal having run out, we gradually drifted towards the beach, and a nasty rocky beach it appeared, looking at it from our position. Fortunately our plight was observed by a destroyer, which promptly came to our assistance, passed us a hawser, and at considerable risk to himself, took us in tow, and eventually brought us up to the south of the island, where all the other ships, both large and small, had made their way as soon as the wind shifted, to shelter from the gale.

Having lost one anchor in getting out of our last predicament, and the cable on the other one being too short for anchoring in such deep water (about thirty-five fathoms) we lay for the night astern of the destroyer that had towed us round, connected by two good hawsers.

The captain of the destroyer asked me to dine with him, and sent his skiff; after what was to me a perfect banquet (for I had not had a decent meal since leaving Port Said), we got our pipes and grog well under way, and as is the way of sailormen, we yarned until exhaustion sent me back to my ship and my host to his bunk.

The next morning, the weather being fine, we were towed to the "parent" ship, there to have the necessary defects made good. Repairs completed, we proceeded to Mudros, and on arrival there were ordered on other service, and so ended an unpleasant voyage in one of the old "shovel-nosed" T.B.'s. May their old bones rest in peace, wherever they are, and let us pray that none like them may spring into existence again, to plague the souls of suffering sailormen.

THE LITERATURE OF THE SEA

“ The love of the sea, to which some men and nations confess so readily, is a complex sentiment wherein pride enters for much, necessity for not a little, and the love of ships—the untiring servants of our hopes and our self-esteem—for the best and most genuine part.”—JOSEPH CONRAD.

I WONDER how many people there are who read books about sailors and ships, who pause to ask themselves, “ What does the author actually know of the sea : how much of his writing is due to imagination, and how much to actual experience ? ”

It would probably surprise the average reader of tales of the sea to be told that authors with professional knowledge of their subject were very few in number, so few, in fact, that I venture to think a brief reference to the sea classics of modern times, written by men of the sea, will be of sufficient interest to justify this essay.

I do not propose to deal with authors in chronological order, but to discourse indiscriminately of books of the sea, giving my impressions and views as they occur to me.

I cannot resist the temptation to remark, here and now, on the pitfalls that beset the path of the uninitiated when writing on nautical subjects. We read, for instance, in any newspaper or magazine of fiction, of the “ captain’s bridge ” : where is it, what is it ? We men of the sea know it not, despite its popularity. “ Full steam ahead ” is another popular phrase which conveys nothing to the ears of a seaman. Most nautical writers will persist in speaking of “ on a ship ” when they mean “ in a ship,” and I have

often wondered why; these same people do not refer to living "on a house," therefore why not use the correct expression when speaking or writing of a ship? The difference is one of place only.

I have recently come across the following expressions, used by men who should know better: why will they persist in the practice?

Land was sighted to the port.

There was a ship on the starboard.

To the windward of us.

We cast our anchor at that moment.

For the benefit of those writers who wish to improve their nautical style, I earnestly commend to their notice the remarks of one who, in addition to being a seaman, was also one of our leading men of letters—Joseph Conrad. The remarks will be found in Chapter VII of "The Mirror of the Sea."

An incident apropos the phraseology of the sea occurs to me, and I think it will not be out of place to relate it here. Some years ago while serving in a small cruiser in Australian waters, we left one port for another which was distant about two hundred miles; after leaving it was found that a stoker, R.N.R., had missed his passage.

On arrival at our destination the missing man reported on board, having travelled up by rail. He was in due course brought before the commander, a rigid disciplinarian and very punctilious in the observation of what he termed the time-honoured phraseology of the sea. The following conversation took place:

COMMANDER: What have you to say?

STOKER: Please, sir, I missed the boat and came on by train.

COMMANDER: Missed the what?

STOKER: Missed the boat, sir.

COMMANDER: What is your rating?

STOKER: Fireman, sir.

COMMANDER: What?

STOKER : Please, sir, a fireman.

COMMANDER (visibly moved) : You have given no adequate reason for missing your passage, you call a ship a boat, and you, a stoker, call yourself a fireman ! What the devil is the service coming to ? Fourteen days IOA for missing your passage and for being a damned lubber !

Mais revenons a nos moutons and discourse on the literary work of seamen.

The first name that occurs to my mind is that of Joseph Conrad, that strange genius who has enriched our language. Of Polish birth and ancestry, born in a land which no sea touches, he felt the mystic call, and despite family opposition he achieved his purpose and entered the merchant service of England when he was about twenty years of age, at that time knowing little of our language.

In that service he spent some seventeen years of his life, rising to the command of both sailing and steamships, and at thirty-seven years of age he left the service of the sea, with the unfinished manuscript of a novel in his bag, the manuscript that afterwards appeared in book form as " *Almayer's Folly*," the publication of which marked Conrad's entry into the great world of letters. The story of that novel is told in his book, " *A Personal Record*," and is interesting reading.

I think I am correct in stating that part of this book was written during the period that Conrad was serving as chief mate of the famous old sailing ship *Torrens*; it was in this ship that he found his first reader, and met John Galsworthy, and so began a friendship of a lasting character.

Then there is " *The Nigger of the Narcissus*," a wonderful study of the psychology of a negro seaman, with a ship and the sea for a setting and told as only a seaman could tell such a tale. The nigger dominates the whole life of the ship, from the moment he comes on board with such dramatic suddenness in

Bombay, to the moment that his body is committed to the depths of the North Atlantic Ocean.

"Typhoon," as its name suggests, is a description of one of those scourges of the China Seas, and describes the experiences of the steamship *Nan-Shan*, commanded by Captain MacWhirr, a dull-witted, stupid old sea dog, who thought the second engineer "a very violent man: in fact, a profane man," and all because he had heard the second engineer expressing his opinion of the weather in lurid terms!

And there are "Lord Jim," "Chance," "Youth," "The Shadow Line," and many more. This is not an advertisement for Joseph Conrad—he requires none—but merely a tribute from a brother seaman who has a profound admiration for his genius and is grateful for the pleasure he has derived from his books. Let those who love stories of the sea read those books of Conrad's which I have mentioned: they will not be disappointed.

Another master of sea stories and poems is John Masfield, himself a sailor. First come his poems of the sea, "Salt Water Ballads," "Ballads and Poems" and "Dauber"; who but a sailor could have written these lines:

"I must go down to the sea again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by;
And the wheel's kick, and the wind's song, and the white sail
shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face, and a grey dawn breaking"?

Or again, from "Cape Horn Gospel":

"Josey slipped from the topsail yard, an' bust his bloody back,
(Which comed from playing the giddy goat, and leaving go the
jack).
We lashed his chips in clouts of sail, and ballasted him with
stones,
The Lord hath taken away, we said, and we give him to Davy
Jones.
And that was afore we were up with the Line."

And this from "Prayer":

"And in the dim green quiet place far out of sight and hearing,
Grant I may hear at whiles the wash and thrash of the sea foam
About the fine keen bows of the stately clippers steering
Towards the lone northern star and the fair ports of home."

And from "One of the Bos'ns Yarns":

"Loafin' around in Sailor Town, a'bluin' o' my advance,
I met a derelict donkeyman who led me a merry dance,
Till he landed me and bleached me fair, in the bar of a rum
saloon,
'N there he spun me a juice of a yarn to this yer brand o'
tune.

'It's a solemn gospel, mate,' says he, 'but a man as ships aboard
A steamer tramp, he gets his whack of the wonders of the
Lord—

Such as roaches crawlin' over his bunk, 'n snakes inside his
bread,
And work by night and work by day, enough to strike him
dead.' "

These verses are the real thing, and express the sentiment of ships and the sea as only a deep-water sailorman could express it.

Of Masfield's prose works there are "Lost Endeavour," a story of the late seventeenth century, and one which reminds me of "Treasure Island," and two others which should be better known among men of the sea than they are. I refer to "On the Spanish Main" and "Sea Life in Nelson's Time."

The former is a delightful book, being a condensed history of the notorious pirates of the West Indies and thereabouts and some of their exploits, containing, as it does, information not to be obtained without referring to ponderous tomes like Johnson's "History of the Pyrates," Burney's "History of the Buccaneers of America," or "Buccaneers of America," by Esquemeling, himself a pirate turned author. (It is in the last-named work that mention is made of Israel Hands, immortalized by Stevenson in "Treasure Island.")

There are also two volumes of short stories and sketches by Masefield—"A Mainsail Haul" and "A Tarpaulin Muster"—both of them containing many fine tales of the sea, the latter being principally reminiscences of the author's sea life. I regret to see in the last edition of "A Mainsail Haul" (1914) that the dedication has been omitted, which is a deplorable remissness. In the first edition (1905) that dedication was :

"To the memory of Wallace Blair, A.B.
My kind old friend and shipmate."

and these words must have been a source of pride and pleasure to those who were near and dear to that old seaman.

There is one other omission in the same edition which I deplore; it is that story entitled "In a New York Saloon," which resembles "A Raines Law Arrest" in "A Tarpaulin Muster"; both of these stories are obviously reminiscences, and I cannot understand the omission of the former: they are both similar to the tales of "Bagdad-on-the-Subway" (otherwise "New York City") of O. Henry, and are far too good to lose.

The next tale of the sea that occurs to me is "The Brassbounder," by David W. Bone, now commanding one of the Cunard-Anchor Line steamships. This book is a sea classic, and worthy to be placed beside Dana's immortal story. The life of an apprentice on board a sailing ship twenty-odd years ago is graphically described, and although I have just read it for the nth time since its publication in 1910, I find it as refreshing now as I did then, and it still recalls to my mind those far-off days under canvas when, to quote John Masefield :

"I yarned with ancient shipmen beside the galley range,
And some were fond of women, but all were fond of change;
They sang their quavering chanties, all in a fo'c'sle drone,
And I was finely suited, if I had only known."

The episode of the arrival off San Francisco of the barque *Florence* with her cargo of coal smouldering, and the crafty manœuvring of her skipper, old Jock Leish (that canny Scottish seaman), in his endeavour to outwit Cap'en Jan Cutbush, of the 'Frisco tug *Active*, is a perfect gem of nautical humour, ending as it does with Cap'en Cutbush apostrophizing himself thus :

“ Cap'en Jan S. Cutbush, the smartest skipper on the Front, done in the eye by a burgoo-eatin' son of a gun of a grey-headed lime-juicer ! ”

The description of the old ship weathering “ The Stags ” by a piece of superb seamanship on the part of the old skipper is a fine example of descriptive writing, and could only have been written by a seaman, and by one who had witnessed such a manœuvre.

Bone has written another book since “ The Brass-bounder,” this time a collection of nautical sketches entitled “ Broken Stowage.” The best yarn in the book to my mind is the one called “ A Deep Water Critic,” followed by “ The Arts Afloat.” There is also another book by the same author which deals with the Merchant Service at war, but it is spoilt by the repeated reference to the Merchant Service as the “ Merchant's Service ” : I hope that this very ugly mistake is due to a printer's error. The work is entitled “ Merchantmen-at-Arms,” and is illustrated by Muirhead Bone, a brother of the author.

Let us now turn to another sea classic—“ The Cruise of the Cachalot,” by Frank Bullen. Here again is a vivid description, written by a seaman, of life in a ship engaged in what is undoubtedly the hardest of all sea pursuits—sperm whaling.

There is not much, one would think, on board a New Bedford whaler to encourage high thinking and an artistic temperament, yet Bullen seems to

have drawn inspiration from such surroundings. To praise such a book as "The Cruise of the Cachalot" would be an impertinence on my part: one of England's greatest men of letters, Rudyard Kipling, has already done that in his letter to the author, in which he says, "it is immense—there is no other word." Mine is the more modest part of paying my tribute to the work of a brother seaman, a work equal to that other sea classic, Dana's "Two Years before the Mast."

Bullen wrote many other stories of the sea, among which I should like to mention "The Log of a Sea Waif," a book which is autobiographical; and one very little known work which contains a wealth of information concerning the habits of pelagic fish and birds, information which must always be of interest to those who do their business in great waters: I refer to "Creatures of the Deep."

This brings me to one of the most widely known of all books of the sea—"Two Years before the Mast," by Richard Henry Dana, Junior. It ill becomes the roving pen of a sailor to attempt to add lustre to that immortal record of sea life: I will content myself with saying that it could only have been written by a man thoroughly acquainted with the sea.

I have just seen a new edition of this book, published by Macmillan's, with illustrations by Charles Pears; it is the best edition of the book that I have ever seen, and the illustrations are worth looking at, for the nautical detail is absolutely correct.

Two books, both of them written from personal experience, one by a seaman, the other by a medical man serving at sea, must be added to my list.

The first one is that thoroughly salt-water diary, "Round the Horn before the Mast," by Basil Lubbock: it is a modern type of Dana's work; neither of the authors was a seaman in the strict sense of the word, but both had followed the calling of seamen for

their own purposes, therefore I must include them among the seamen who write of the sea.

The nautical experiences of Dana and Lubbock were in many respects similar: Dana was the son of a distinguished man of letters, and did not adopt the sea as a profession, but took to it for reasons of health. On returning from his voyage in the brig *Pilgrim* he resumed his study of the law, and was admitted to the bar of Massachusetts, giving to the world his famous book in the year 1840.

Lubbock also came from a distinguished family, and did not adopt the sea as a profession, but like Dana, followed it for private reasons, shipping before the mast in the four-masted barque *Royalshire* (a fictitious name), making the voyage from San Francisco to England in her, and the result of that voyage was a valuable addition to the literature of the sea.

Lubbock has further contributed to that literature with his books "The China Clippers," "The Colonial Clippers," "The Blackwall Frigates," "The Western Ocean Packets," and "The Log of the Cutty Sark," all of them, as is indicated by the titles, dealing with the history of famous ships of past years, their commanders and crews.

The other book referred to is "The Surgeon's Log," written by Dr. A. Johnston Abraham, and it relates the experiences of the author while serving as medical officer in one of the "Blue Funnel Line" steamships. This is a wander book, but it is so delightful and fascinating, and so intimately connected with ships and the sea, sailors and their way of life, that I feel justified in including it among what I have termed the classics of the sea.

The author's description of his quest for a ship, and the constantly repeated question he is asked in the offices of the various shipping companies, "Are you a teetotaller?" is not only humorous, but is typical of so many shipping firms, who regard all men

who follow the sea as chronic dypsomaniacs. The average commercial mind can never understand that there is something more in life than buying and selling, that some higher motive inspires men of British race to adopt the sea as a profession, and that, generally speaking, the sailorman is a more honourable, more sober man than those who are so ready to attribute to him vices with which they themselves are well acquainted.

The quite pathetic little story related in this book, of the second mate and the little *mousmè*, Ponta, has a touch of "Madame Butterfly," and to me, as a sailorman who has roved up and down the seas of the world, it has a ring of sincerity about it!

I cannot resist quoting a few words from the epilogue—they will be meaningless to the dwellers in cities, the toilers and moilers on life's highway—but to those who have known the mystic influence of the sea and of the East they will convey a wealth of meaning, and bring back memories of bygone days spent on the seas and in the ports of the world.

"Sometimes a weariness of London comes over me, and I feel that I would give almost anything to be on the high seas again. There are certain days and certain things that cause this feeling.

"Sometimes it is only the misery of a cold, raw day that sets me thinking. Often I get it crossing one of London's bridges when the tide is in, and the salt tang strikes upon one's nostrils. Sometimes it is casually seeing in the Shipping Intelligence the name of my old ship that sets me off."

There speaks the real lover of the sea, and one who was in the incipient stages of that insidious malady termed by the Hun "wanderlust," than which there is nothing more ruinous to one's prospects in life. I, who write, have been in its grip, and I know.

Doctor Abraham has earned the gratitude of all those who love ships and the sea by his contribution to the literature of the subject, and "The Surgeon's Log" should find a place among the sea classics.

I am reminded of another wander book written by a medical man: one which has much to do with the sea; I refer to that very interesting and historical book, "The Cradle of the Deep," by the late Sir Frederick Treves, the eminent surgeon. It is full of entertaining scraps of little-known West Indian history, and its many allusions to the notorious pirates of the Spanish Main—Ringrose, Morgan, Bartholomew Sharp, Teach, and many another of those picturesque, rum-drinking, hardy knaves—add to its interest.

There is a very fine description of the unquiet end of Edward Teach, mariner, *alias* "Blackbeard," at the hands of Lieutenant Maynard, R.N., which should be of interest to all sailormen. Teach was one of the most unholy scoundrels who ever polluted salt water, and he died as he had lived: in blood and rum. One of his stout lads was Israel Hands, and he was the only one of Teach's crew who escaped, for he was on shore at the time of the unfortunate affair with Maynard, nursing a wounded knee which Teach, in merry mood, had inflicted on him.

The mention of pirates brings to my mind a little book of verse which is not very widely known; it has a preface by John Masefield, and should be of interest to all who are attracted by pirates and their exploits. The title is "Buccaneer Ballads," by E. H. Visiak, and it is published by Elkin Matthews, London.

The West Indies brings to mind yet another famous sea book, "Tom Cringle's Log," by Michael Scott; this was written from personal experience, and although Scott was not a professional seaman, he had spent so much of his life at sea that his famous "Log" must be included in the literature of the sea.

Herman Melville will ever rank as one of the greatest sea authors. In his book "Redburn" he recounts his experiences on his first voyage to sea in the forecabin of an American packet ship. At the termination of that voyage he makes a strange change of profession by becoming a teacher in a school near New York, but tiring of the change he returns to sea, shipping in a South Sea whaler, from which he deserted in the Marquesas Islands: his life in those islands is told in both "Typee" and "Omoo." In "Moby Dick" Melville gives to the world an account of life in an American South Sea whaler in the early nineteenth century.

This classic of the sea stands alone, and it is only to be compared with Bullen's "The Cruise of the Cachalot."

I was almost omitting from my list of sailor authors the name of Clark Russell, which would indeed have been an unpardonable omission on my part. He spent the early years of his life under canvas in the fine old clipper ships sailing out of London to Australia in the eighteen sixties or thereabouts, and he has contributed some very fine yarns to the literature of the sea, among which I personally prefer "The Wreck of the *Grosvenor*."

The description in that book of the passage down Channel of the ship *Grosvenor* is a word picture of great beauty, drawn by the pen of a sailorman who was evidently a keen observer of nature, and a true son of that great

"Mother and lover of men, the sea,"

and it has few equals throughout the range of modern sea literature.

I will here make confession that it was the books of Clark Russell, eagerly read while yet at an English public school, that set me clamouring for a life on the ocean wave, and despite family opposition, I obtained my desire—whether for good or ill does

not concern this narrative—and so to sea I went in due course.

There is an author of considerable repute in the world of letters who, when writing of the sea, betrays the professional hand: I refer to Morley Roberts, but I am unable to state definitely that he is a seaman. He probably followed the sea in the same way that Jack London did. I find in a book attributed to Morley Roberts—"The Record of Nicholas Freydon"—many references to the sea, including a description of a voyage to Australia in a sailing ship some time in the 'seventies, a period which would coincide with the boyhood of Morley Roberts.

His best known books of the sea are "Salt of the Sea" and "Sea Dogs," both of them collections of short stories dealing with mariners and their affairs; it is in the former book that there appears that gem of a nautical story, "The Promotion of the Admiral."

That fine story, "The Grain Carriers" by Edward Noble, always struck me as being the work of one who had gone through the mill in sailing ships, but, as with Morley Roberts, I am unable to write with certainty, although I cannot think that such a book as "The Grain Carriers" could have been written by other than a seaman.

"The Mutiny of the *Elsinore*" by Jack London is the work of a man who in his time played many parts, among them being that of a sailor. This book resembles in some ways Conrad's "The Nigger of the *Narcissus*," and the setting is very similar: a deep water voyage in a sailing ship, a weird collection of marine curiosities for a crew, the boatswain with the curious name—Sundry Buyers—the austere Samurai captain, the hard old sea dog of a chief mate, Mr. Pike, with a cultivated taste in music, and a knack of making salt water impostors work for their living with the aid of his iron fist; the villainous second mate, Mr. Mellaire, reminding one of the vile Cockney, Huish, in "The Ebb Tide." A real salt

water tale with the tang of the sea in it, bearing evidence of having been written by a man who was well acquainted with the ways of deep water sailormen.

"School and Sea Days" by Alan Oscar is an interesting personal record of the author's life at Magdalen College, Oxford, and afterwards as a cadet and junior officer in the H.E.I. Co.'s famous ship *Hotspur*, commanded by the late Captain Henry Toynbee, at one time the Marine Superintendent of the Meteorological Office, London. It is an entertaining account of life in the Merchant Service half a century ago in an East Indiaman, and among other things there is a vivid account of a cyclone in the Bay of Bengal; the original edition contained illustrations by the author.

"Alan Oscar" was the pseudonym of the late Captain W. B. Whall, at one time a Principal Officer of the Board of Trade, and the author of several well-known nautical text books. To those who are interested in the literature of the sea, I would commend two other books written by Captain Whall—"Sea Songs and Shanties" and "Shakespeare's Sea Terms Explained."

Another good book of personal experience is "The Sea and the Jungle" by H. M. Tomlinson. The author was apparently a London journalist who, fed up with the monotony of a sedentary life, weary of catching the eight thirty-five train to the city and either gazing dully through its carriage windows, or reading the piffle and inanities of the daily papers, at last yielded to the solicitations of his friend, the "Skipper," signed on as purser in a tramp steamer, and voyaged in her from Swansea to Brazil, and for two thousand miles up the Amazon and Madeira Rivers.

His description of the vast forest primeval of that mighty river is a fine piece of descriptive writing: one can almost see the river and the forest as one reads, so vividly is it described. Writing as a sea-

man, I venture the opinion that life on board the iron-decked tramp steamship *Capella* while she was in the river must have been remarkably uncomfortable for the white men in her. A good description of life in a tramp steamer at sea for the first part of the book, and then the river.

It would be impossible to consider this chat about books of the sea as complete without reference to "Treasure Island," which will always rank as a sea classic although its author was not a seaman. Stevenson makes one or two quaint errors in seamanship which I will venture to point out, not in a captious spirit but because they seem to have escaped the notice of critics.

For instance, Israel Hands, the cynical, blood-stained mariner, orders the boy, Jim Hawkins, to "Luff, my hearty, luff, and I put the helm hard up!" and again, the reference to "yesterday morning in the dog watch!" but these are trifling mistakes for a landsman to make, and surely we seamen will forgive our beloved R. L. S.

What character in the whole range of sea literature can be found comparable to John Silver, the one-legged cook of the *Hispaniola*, with his wicked-looking old parrot—Cap'en Flint—of whom his owner remarked: "Now that bird is, maybe, two hundred years old—they lives for ever mostly—and if anybody's seen more wickedness, it must be the devil hisself."

Can cynical philosophy be expressed in fewer words than are used by Mr. Israel Hands in his famous harangue to the boy Hawkins?

"For thirty years I've sailed the seas, and seen good and bad, better and worse, fair weather and foul, provisions running out, knives going and what not. Well, now, I tell you, I never seen good come o' goodness yet. Him as strikes first is my fancy: dead men don't bite; them's my views—amen, so be it."

This brief summary of guiding principles for a successful life appears to have been adopted, with slight modifications, as the creed of the modern company promoter, the International Jew and the war profiteer.

It is on record that when this incomparable tale of adventure first appeared, in a penny weekly entitled *Young Folks* (circa 1882), it was voted by its readers to be "rot!" and it was eventually bought by the firm of Cassell & Co. for the sum of £100. G. B. Shaw was stating a truth when he cynically remarked: "Life levels all men: death only reveals the eminent."

The mention of "Treasure Island" naturally suggests tales of adventure, so even at the risk of being reminded that I am wandering far away from my set subject, I feel that this essay would be incomplete without a reference to "Westward Ho!"

What a glorious masterpiece of word painting that book is, revealing fresh beauties each time of reading. I cannot believe that there lives a soul so dead that it cannot derive pleasure from its perusal.

How clearly the dear old village of Bidford stands out as we read: how all the characters are mentally pictured—Amyas Leigh, Salvation Yeo, Mr. Oxenham, The Rose of Torridge and the rest; and then the description of the loss of the Spanish galleon on the Shutter Rock, a spot, by the way, where H.M.S. *Montagu* was lost in the year 1906. A worthy book indeed and I make no apology for mentioning it here.

"South Sea Bubbles" is not a book written by a seaman, but like the famous "Voyage of the *Sunbeam*" it must be included in an article of this description.

It is an account of a voyage in a yacht among the South Sea Islands, ending up with the wreck of the yacht on one of the islands of the Fiji Archipelago. It is written in a fine, breezy style, and discourses of

the customs and habits of life of the natives of the islands, and written as far back as 1871, it can still be regarded almost as a guide book.

In the preface to the fifth edition will be found this extract indicating that the "Earl" was possessed with a keen sense of humour and a hatred of humbugs and prudes as profound as was his hatred of missionaries.

"To you who say that it is not a fit book for a young lady to read, I answer simply, that though I believe that no innocent girl (not related to your family) would be any the worse for it, it was never intended for their perusal; and I have yet to learn that all literature is to be rendered adaptable to Miss Skimperton's Academy. As for the rest of even your family consisting of the older women, the men and the boys, I will only say that if they cannot read a frank, enthusiastic description of a cruise amongst pleasant places and pleasant people (startling though the frankness may occasionally be) without their minds creating prurient reflections, I am very sorry for them."

The authors of this fascinating book were the fourteenth Earl of Pembroke and Doctor Kingsley, a connection of the author of "Westward Ho!"

I must now make reference to a book similar to Basil Lubbock's "The China Clippers," already referred to. It is entitled "The Clipper Ship Era" by Arthur H. Clark, an American shipmaster, and it is a history of the clipper ships of both the United States and Great Britain between the years 1843 and 1869, the year of the opening of the Suez Canal, which ended the era of clipper ships.

In this book will be found records of famous passages; the names, records, and in some instances the portraits, of the men who commanded these ships, and in examining the portraits of these men of the sea, one is struck by the nobility of appearance and

the air of distinction which they bear; to those who can refer to the book I call their attention to Captain R. H. Waterman of the ship *Highflyer*, Captain Lauchlan McKay of the ship *Sovereign of the Seas*, and Captain Philip Dumaresq of the ship *Romance of the Seas*. These are types of seamen we do not see to-day: perhaps it is due to the lack of training in sail, or probably that class of men have been driven in disgust from a profession which, until a few years ago, offered little inducement to men of education; what the future may have in store for the sea as a profession is problematical: time only will tell.

I think I stated at the commencement of this talk about books that I made no pretence to place the names of authors in chronological order, and I now say the same in regard to their literary merit: such act on my part would be presumptuous, for I am not a man of letters; if I were to attempt the task, however, the name of J. E. Patterson would be nearer to that of Joseph Conrad than it is.

Patterson did not confine himself exclusively to writing of the sea: he drew inspiration from other sources, but was at his best in his stories of the sea. He was a seaman, and had followed the sea for many years, ill health and failing eyesight compelling him to abandon it.

His best known works are "Fishers of the Sea," "Watchers by the Shore," and "My Vagabondage," the latter autobiographical. On the outbreak of war, Patterson "did his bit," as far as in him lay, for he returned to his old profession, and gave us his experiences in "A War-time Voyage"; one posthumous book has been published (1919) entitled "The Passage of the barque *Sappho*," a tale of a voyage in a deep water sailing ship.

Patterson was a man who wrote of life as he saw it; the sea had been his cradle and he loved it passionately, and when the sun of his sea-going went down something went out of his life. He died

practically in harness in April, 1919, and knowing something of the man and his life, I can but hope that

“ After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well.”

For my next sea author we must go to the engine-room and call on the chief engineer, William McFee, and all who appreciate fine literature, albeit not confined to the sea as a subject, will find in the many works of Mr. McFee both literary grace and distinction. Those of his books dealing with the sea are, “ Casuals of the Sea,” “ Letters from an Ocean Tramp,” “ Command,” and “ Captain Macedoine's Daughter.”

In the preface of his book “ Aliens ” I find the following, which states briefly the creed of William McFee :

“ Of art I never grow weary, but she calls me over the world. I suspect the sedentary art worker. Most of all I suspect the sedentary writer. I divide authors into two classes—genuine artists, and educated men who wish to earn enough to let them live like country gentlemen. With the latter I have no concern. But the artist knows when his time has come. In the same way I turned with irresistible longing to the sea, whereon I had been wont to earn my living. It is a good life, and I love it. I love the men and their ships. I find in them a never-ending panorama which illustrates my theme, the problem of human folly.”

And at the end of that preface I read these words :

“ It may be, also, that ere it (‘ Aliens ’) sees the light I shall have gone away myself, an aggrieved participant in one of the trivial disasters of the sea-affair. But whatever betide, I shall have had my shot at the alluring yet ineluctable problem of human folly.”

William McFee is the son of a shipmaster, and was born at sea, hence, I suppose, his love for it; he is also the only marine engineer that I know of who has taken to literature.

I am indebted to an American author and journalist, Christopher Morley, for my knowledge of William McFee. In his delightful book "Shandy-gaff" (a title which should appeal to a sailor, who has been defined as a being who makes his living on water but never touches it on shore), there is a chapter devoted to William McFee and his books, from which I extract the following :

"The life of a merchantman engineer does not seem to open a fair prospect into literature. The work is gruelling and at the same time monotonous. Constant change of scene and absence of home ties are (I speak subject to correction) demoralizing; after the coveted chief's certificate is won, ambition has little further to look forward to. A small and stuffy cabin in the belly of the ship is not an inviting study. The works of Miss Marie Corelli and Messrs. Haig and Haig are the only diversions of most of the profession. Art, literature, and politics do not interest them. Picture postcards, waterside saloons, and the ladies of the port, are the glamour of life that they delight to honour."

There is no doubt in my mind that the above words will be deeply resented (if they are ever read, which is unlikely) by the majority of marine engineers who, hailing from the land designated by Sydney Smith as the garret of the earth, will fail to see the sardonic humour of them, but, be that as it may, I can only echo Christopher Morley, and say : "I have finished reading 'Casuals of the Sea' : a good book."

One more book of the sea and I have finished, but not quite exhausted, my subject; that book is Kipling's "Captains Courageous," a tale of the

Grand Banks. It is a story of the regeneration of youth, and has for its protagonist the youthful son of an American millionaire, who, during the course of a voyage from the United States to Europe, falls overboard when the ship is in the vicinity of the Newfoundland Banks, and is rescued by the fishing schooner *We're Here*, on board which craft he has, perforce, to remain until her return to her home port at the end of the fishing season. During his sojourn on board the schooner he is transformed from what is commonly termed a young boulder into a man, which is an advantage to him and a surprise to his fond parents. The characters in this fine story of the sea are true to life; the skipper of the *We're Here*—Disco Troop—being an exceptionally fine type of seaman, and one is forced to the conclusion that Kipling has drawn them all from personal observation, and has probably spent some of his time in one of the fishing vessels engaged in that arduous life on the Grand Banks of Newfoundland.

And so I come to the end of my discourse; I have purposely omitted all naval authors, from Smollet to Bartimeus, not with malice prepense, but for the reason that I have endeavoured to confine myself to those authors who have written of the sea from the Merchant Service point of view, which offers, perhaps, the greater sphere of observation.

А.П.Θ.



WRECK OF TRANSPORT "NORSEMAN": VICE ADMIRAL DE ROBECK AND
COMMODORE ROGER KEYES.

THE BEACH

"And some there are will never quit that bleak and bloody shore,
And some that marched and fought with us will fight and march
no more :

Their blood has bought till judgment day, the slopes they
stormed so well,

And we're leaving them, leaving them, sleeping where they
fell."

—"Farewell to Anzac," C. FOX SMITH.

In the early days of the late war I served for a period as beach-master on what was referred to in official documents as "K" beach, which was actually the beach at Kephalo, in the island of Imbros, then a place of some importance, it being the advanced base for the military operations taking place on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

At the time of my appointment I was stationed at Mudros, and left there on a fine summer morning, sailing in what was in pre-war days a North Sea trawler, but then employed under the white ensign conveying mails, stores, ratings, etc., between the two bases of Mudros and Imbros. The name of this stout little craft has long since faded from my memory—I think she was then known by a number only, not having risen to the dignity of a name—but my recollection of her is that she was small, uncomfortable, very busy, and very full of vicious flies.

In due course we arrived at Kephalo and closed the flagship for orders: nothing was known of my appointment, consequently I was left to shift for myself, not a difficult or a surprising thing, as I had

experienced six months of what was termed organization by the naval authorities in the Mediterranean : the proper term to use would be chaos, as that reigned supreme throughout the Gallipoli Campaign. I left the trawler and made my way to the beach, where I found a good Samaritan who fixed me up with a tent for the night, and despite the fact that I had no bedding I managed to sleep quite comfortably on the warm sand. The next morning I was up early and sought the officer whom I was to relieve; having discovered him and made myself known (he seemed surprised at my arrival, knowing nothing whatever about being relieved of his duties on the beach), we had a walk round, and I learnt from him the nature of my duties. During our walk I was attracted by the spectacle of the flagship lying at anchor off the beach, and on each side of her there was a tramp steamer made fast, the object of which was to protect the warship from torpedo attack; actually using unarmed and unprotected ships of the despised mercantile marine to shield a battleship having not less than twelve inches of armour on her sides! Thought I to myself, wonders will never cease.

The duties of beach-master on the hot sandy beach of that wind-swept island were many and various : in particular I remember that the first duty of the day was to superintend the dispatch of the daily trawlers, two in number, which conveyed stores, provisions, mails, and odd passengers to the various beaches of the Peninsula : they left " K " beach at six a.m. daily, one for Cape Helles, the other for Anzac and Suvla, and their dispatch was always of interest to me, and, when one permitted oneself to reflect, very sad, for on those daily trips many officers and men would take passage, some never to return, their bodies left to rot upon that accursed Peninsula of sinister memory; others to return in another trawler sooner or later, their bodies swathed in a service blanket, to be buried in the desolate God's acre on the hill above

the beach, lulled to eternal sleep by the booming of the surf on the shores of that island of unrest.

It has been my sad duty to receive and escort to their last resting-place very many of those poor mutilated bodies, and I remember, not without emotion even now, one very pathetic incident in connection with the dispatch of those daily trawlers.

An Indian brigade had been resting at Imbros after severe fighting on the Peninsula, and their period of rest having expired, they were returning to the fighting line. As the last of them was embarking, the officer in command, a major, spoke to his servant, who was apparently to remain behind, and I particularly noticed the parting between officer and man for two reasons, one being that the tears were streaming down the bronze-coloured cheeks of the native servant as he quietly sobbed in the peculiar manner of natives of India : the other was that he had a small monkey perched on his shoulder, looking almost as sad and disconsolate as he did himself. After parting with his servant, the major turned to me and remarked : " Emotional little chaps, these natives, but good fellows when you know them ; so long, old man, see you again when we return," and with a wave of his hand he jumped aboard the trawler, and away she went.

Having served in Indian waters myself, and knowing something of the language, I turned to the servant and asked him why he was remaining behind, and he informed me that orders had been given that he and other of the servants were to remain at Kephalo for the time, and for himself, he was very unhappy at not being allowed to go with his sahib ; yes, he had been with the major sahib for some years, and had served with the Thibetan Expedition (I noticed that he wore the ribbon for that campaign on his tunic) ; yes, the monkey belonged to his sahib, and he was going to look after it while he was away.

The sequel to this very ordinary incident occurred

a few days later, and this was the way of it : I was standing on the small pier that was used for embarking and disembarking troops and stores awaiting the arrival alongside of a trawler, then just manœuvring for position, when a messenger brought me a signal which read : " Trawler 123 leaving for ' K ' beach with bodies of officers and men for burial : please arrange."

I then noticed that it was trawler 123 approaching the pier, so I sent at once to the padre, requesting him to arrange for the funeral. The little trawler came to rest alongside, the business of landing the bodies proceeded, and, the mournful task ended, the trawler backed out and went about her business, and all was once more quiet on the pier ; so quiet and peaceful was it all that an effort of imagination was required to enable one to realize that this was war, that our presence on that desolate island was due to war, and that the pier upon which I was standing was itself a product of war ; but when I turned and saw that row of silent figures wrapped in grey service blankets, lying so still upon the planks of that little pier, I knew that this indeed was war, and that those blankets shrouded the shattered remnants of men who had paid their last tribute to England.

I walked towards those still figures, each with a label attached telling the name or number, the regiment or unit, of the dead, and stooping in curiosity over the first figure that I came to, I looked at the label and read the following inscription :

Major ——
——th Ghurkas.

That was the name and regiment of the officer who had bade me such a cheery " so long " in the same place but two or three days previously. I stood silently contemplating that bleeding piece of earth, my mind filled with

" Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears,"

when I was awakened from my reverie by the approach of the stretcher party which had come to convey the bodies to their last resting-place.

After giving the necessary instructions to this party, I turned and walked away, and as I did so I saw approaching me the Indian servant, with the little monkey running beside him, held by a leash. Little did that servant think, as he sauntered along the pier, that his master, his major sahib, was so near him—dead. Beckoning to the native to follow me, I turned and retraced my footsteps, and halting before the row of bodies, I pointed to that of the major and told him that there lay all that was left of his master. He looked at me with wonder and incredulity on his face, then looked at the body, then again turning to me he said: "Truly, sahib?" and I assured him that there was no doubt that his master was dead, and there lay his body. With a low cry he threw himself beside the corpse, covered his face with his hands, and swayed to and fro moaning, a truly pathetic figure of grief: and all the time the little monkey sat beside him chattering, his funny little forehead one mass of wrinkles, looking as though he were trying to understand what it all meant.

And the end of the story was that the Indian servant and I followed the bodies to the grave, and there saw them committed to the earth. As I was returning to the beach alone, I turned and looked on the scene, and there, still standing beside the grave, the monkey with him, was that faithful Indian servant watching the earth being thrown into his master's grave.

Life on that beach was not entirely composed of similar mournful events: there was a humorous side, as the following incidents will show.

I remember a certain general officer arriving from England, bound for the Peninsula, where he was to take over the command of a division. He was a large,

deep voiced, pompous man, one of the old school of military officers, more beef than brains, and he arrived at " K " beach at dusk of a summer day. He was accompanied by a youthful aide-de-camp, whose breeches excited my admiration, for they were more after the style of ballet skirts than military breeches, so baggy were they, and in addition to this exquisite young warrior he brought a vast quantity of personal luggage—holdalls, rugs, camp kit, helmet and other cases, the latter engaging his most earnest attention. When everything was landed to his apparent satisfaction, and a fatigue party was transporting his belongings to his quarters, he took himself away, and I sincerely hoped that I had seen the last of the old nuisance, but my hope was vain : within an hour he of the baggy breeches appeared, with woe depicted on his countenance, and informed me that there was a case belonging to his general that could not be found, and would I please make inquiries.

I made inquiries of all concerned with the handling of that gear, but with a negative result, so the aide had to return and report a blank. The next morning the aide again sought me out, and informed me that the general would like to see me in his tent, when convenient, so I at once set out to interview the great man. Arriving at his tent, I found the old gentleman, wearing a pestilential air, and obviously suffering with his liver, so I placidly listened to his tale of woe : he had lost a case : it must have been stolen ; why the devil, sir, did not the navy pay better attention to the kit of a general officer : service going to the dogs, etc., and all the usual rigmarole of an infuriated elderly martinet.

When he had quite finished, and his vocabulary showed signs of exhaustion, I ventured, humbly, to explain to him that every effort to trace the missing case had failed to give a result, and I gave it as my opinion that the case had been lost in transit from Mudros, and had never reached " K " beach ; this

occasioned a fresh outburst of profanity and temper, so I made my escape, leaving the unfortunate young aide to bear the brunt.

Meeting this young soldier a few days later, I inquired of him the nature of the contents of the missing case, thinking in my innocence that it must be something of importance to cause such a disturbance on a well ordered beach, and so much distress to a general officer; but I was quite wrong: the missing case contained nothing of specific military value, for it was a case of champagne!

I feel sure, to this day, that the irate general was firmly convinced that the beachmaster and his colleagues were concerned in the disappearance of that case of champagne. Should this story ever meet his eye, let me assure him that the beachmaster knows nothing of that mysterious disappearance, but had the case turned up and its contents been known, the general would have been none the wiser, for, after the disturbance he had created on the beach, we most assuredly would have thrown the case into the sea.

Another amusing incident of life on that beach occurs to me, and is worth relating. One of the many duties of a beachmaster is the organizing and control of all boats attached to the beach, and those who require a boat to take them to ships or across the bay, must apply to the beachmaster.

One very hot forenoon, whiling away the time by leaning against a bollard on the pier and smoking my pipe, all in the most approved W. W. Jacobs manner (and incidentally garbed very much in the style of that delightful character of his, the night watchman of "Many Cargoes"—uniform not being a strong point with naval officers on that beach), I saw approaching me three military officers. As they drew near I noticed that two of them were colonels and the third one was a chaplain. One of the colonels inquired if I would direct him to the beachmaster; I informed him that he was speaking to that hard

working mariner, and I think that my comic opera appearance startled him, for he looked incredulous; however, he accepted me at my own valuation, for he asked for the use of a steamboat to convey him to the *E*——, a large transport then lying at anchor near the beach, observing that he had business of importance to transact on board, and could the boat wait to bring him back to the pier. I asked the other colonel if he too were going to the same ship, and he replied that he was, also stating that he had urgent duties to perform.

It being part of the duty of a beachmaster to be all things to all men, especially when the men happen to be officers senior in rank to himself, I at once placed a boat at their disposal and gave orders to the coxswain to wait for the officers; the colonels were profuse in their thanks, but so far, the third member of the party had not spoken, although he had apparently been an attentive listener. I noticed that he had a merry twinkle in his eye, so I turned to him and said :

“ Have you, too, matters of urgency requiring your presence on board the same ship, padre? ”

He was an elderly man and stout : the perspiration was streaming down his face, and he was busily wiping it with a large bandana handkerchief. He seemed to be much affected by the heat.

Placing a hand on my shoulder, and looking me straight in the face, he replied in a pronounced Irish brogue : “ Yes, my boy, my business on board that ship is very urgent : she appears to be a fine ship, and I should imagine that there would be a good bar on board her, with plenty of ice and other things, so feeling the want of a cold drink, I knew that if I could get a passage out to her I would get one, and mark ye, if these two officers spoke the truth and shamed the devil (he pronounced it ‘ divil ’), their business is the same as mine precisely, and also as urgent ! ”

Looking at the two colonels, whose faces at that moment presented a study for one of the staff of *Punch*, I smiled and quoted: “ ‘ *Magna est veritas, et prævalebit* ’ : let us all proceed on board that ship—of which I know the captain—and there partake of cool liquid refreshment together, for even beachmasters are thirsty on occasions.”

A good story in connection with “ K ” beach occurs to me, and I have not seen it in print, so I will give it here.

It was from Kephalo that most of the troops were embarked for that ill-fated Suvla landing, and many were taken across in motor lighters, those strange craft known technically as “ beetles ”; ¹ they would accommodate about five hundred men for short distances in smooth water. One of these “ beetles ”

¹ Mention of these craft, and the incident that I am about to relate, reminds one of that chapter entitled “ The Book of the Machines,” in Samuel Butler’s “ Erewhon,” and the following excerpt therefrom:

“ It is said by some with whom I have conversed upon this subject, that the machines can never be developed into animate or quasi-animate existences, inasmuch as they have no reproductive system, nor seem ever likely to possess one. If this be taken to mean that they cannot marry, and that we are never likely to see a fertile union between two vapour engines with the young ones playing about, however greatly we might desire to do so, I will readily grant it, but surely, if a machine is able to reproduce another machine systematically, we may say that it has a reproductive system.”—“ Erewhon,” page 252, Revised Edition, 1918.

One of my beachmates, the M.L.O. (military landing officer), was a well-known peer, and a man with a keen sense of humour; whether he had in mind the foregoing excerpt from Butler, or whether the remark was made on the spur of the moment, I know not, but suffice it that the remark was made. Shortly after the arrival of these craft at Kephalo, there also appeared small iron motor-boats, designed for towing lighters of stores, etc., and seeing one of these small craft for the first time, snorting and puffing among the “ beetles,” my brother officer, after gazing intently at her with his binoculars, walked over to me and remarked, “ Look at that funny little craft over there among the ‘ beetles ’ : where on earth did it come from? It looks to me as though the ‘ beetles ’ have been reproducing their species, and that is one of their youngsters!”

And it certainly appeared, despite Butler’s forecast to the contrary, that we were witnessing the extraordinary spectacle of vapour engines playing with their young!

loaded with troops arrived at Suvla at the appointed time, but unfortunately she took the ground about fifty yards from the beach, in about three feet of water, and there she stuck. The officer in command of the "beetle" shouted to the men to jump into the water and wade ashore, but nobody made an effort; on board the lighter there was, among other officers, a brigadier, who approached the officer commanding the lighter and ordered him to take the craft to a place on the beach where it was possible for the men to go ashore without getting wet; he was informed that it was impossible, as the lighter was stuck in the sand and would not be able to float until she was relieved of the weight of the troops on board, and anyhow, it was only a matter of wading through not more than three feet of water for about fifty yards.

By this time the Turks had opened fire on the "beetle" with rifles, and several men were hit: there was no time to parley about wet feet, so the captain of the lighter jumped into the water himself to show that it was not deep, then climbed back on board and said to the brigadier: "What about ordering your men to get ashore before any more are wounded?" The brigadier commenced once more to babble about getting wet, the men were waiting for orders to disembark, and the captain of the "beetle" was impatient, so without further parley, he again jumped into the water, reached up and pulled that brigadier after him, and then shouted: "There you are, boys, follow your bloody general ashore."

"*Eheu! fugaces labuntur anni*": the war is over, and sailormen may once more pass on the seas upon their lawful occasions, and return to the land from whence they came to enjoy the blessings thereof with the fruits of their labours.

I am writing from a land of peace and plenty, bearing few visible scars to remind one of the grim and bloody work of war, and where the voice of the profiteer is heard loudly proclaiming the glory of those

who have fought in order that he may live, but the memory of that far-off beach with its busy life, its tragedies and comedies, is still very vivid to me, and I look back upon it all with mingled feelings of pleasure and sorrow—pleasure at the thought of the many good fellows one lived and laboured with for so long, sorrow when thinking of the many others whose bones are strewn all over that ghastly peninsula of evil fame.

MEMORIES OF SALONIKA

"Peu de villes au monde ont eu une destinée aussi orageuse que celle de Thessalonique. Sur cette ville plane une fatalité mystérieuse. Le doigt du malheur l'a marquée à chaque âge. Depuis vingt cinq siècles elle est vouée à convoitises renaissantes. Tous les climats lui ont envoyé des maîtres, toutes les mers des pillards. Les hordes venues des contrées lointaines ont battu ses ramparts de leurs flots dévastateurs. Les Sarrassins, les Normands, les Catalans, les Turcs, les corsaires de toutes les races l'ont outragée au passage. Massacres, épidémies, incendies, elle a connu tous les fléaux et toutes les calamités. Elle a accablée d'humiliations et des souffrances. Elle a bu, jusqu'à la lie, le calice d'aumertume."—"La Ville Convoitée," par P. RISAL.

SALONIKA has indeed drained the cup of bitterness to the dregs, and during the twenty-five centuries of her existence she has been overwhelmed with humiliations and sufferings at the hands of savage hordes coming from far countries, but despite the blow to her urban pride, the three and a half years of Allied occupation was a humiliation which her citizens, being mostly Hebrews, were able to bear with fortitude and complacency, having regard to the vast quantity of gold those latest foreign hordes poured into their coffers.

Be that as it may, there is a time and place for everything, and this is not the place to wail the woes to which Salonique has been subjected throughout the ages; that task may be left in the hands of scholars such as Monsieur Risal, from whose interesting book I have quoted at the beginning of this sketch.

As one of the earliest of the foreign hordes to invade the "coveted city," and having lived there for more than three years, it occurs to me that some

reminiscences of my sojourn there may be of interest, more especially as writers seem to have given Salonique "a miss." The only books that I have seen are "The Story of the Salonika Army," by Ward Price, a war correspondent, "The Salonika Side Show," by V. J. Seligman, and "With the French in Salonika," by a French author: these three books treat of the military side of the occupation, and touch very lightly the naval or social sides, hence these ramblings of mine.

My first acquaintance with Salonique was in June, 1915, when all appeared to be peaceful; I was sent there from Mudros to obtain certain information relative to the movement of ships, and in the execution of my duty I also visited Kavalla and Dedeagatch, neither place being of particular interest. I made two or three subsequent visits to these places during the next few weeks, and I once had to land on the Athos Peninsula, that strange neutral territory inhabited and governed by monks of the Greek Church. No female is tolerated in that place, not even those of the lower animals, which must make life extremely dull for the monks. This peninsula is very picturesque, being mountainous and covered with verdure. The various monasteries look like mediaeval castles, and are built in what appears to the eye to be the most inaccessible places, high up on the sides of hills and mountains; many of the buildings are centuries old, the total number of monasteries on the peninsula being twenty, and the monks numbering about six thousand. The latter are an illiterate, dirty crowd of mendicants, holy to a degree if dirt be accounted unto them as holiness: what their exact purpose is in life, I know not, and I do not really care.

My next visit to Salonique was towards the end of the year 1915, and it was destined to be a long one, for I remained there for more than three years without a break, learning, in that long period, to distinguish

each one of the many rich odours of that coveted city. On landing at the well-known Marble Steps, one's nostrils are assailed by the perfume of decayed vegetable matter, dried seaweed, and sewage; walking along the water front this perfume gives way to the odour emanating from the bilges of the native craft, which are moored stern on to the sea wall, mingled with that of a not recently deceased animal, whose body lies in the gutter. Words are totally inadequate to describe the many and varied stinks in the heart of the city, for dirt and sewage abound everywhere, and over and above all there floats the strong, pungent aroma of garlic and sweaty knaves. Truly a city where every prospect pleases, and only man is vile.

It is not my purpose to attempt to write a connected narrative of my three years' residence in Salonique, but rather to discourse of people and events from one man's point of view.

Bearing in mind Pope's maxim that "the proper study of mankind is man," one of the best places in Salonique in which to indulge that study was the famous Café Floca. When I first visited the city, in 1915, this establishment did not appear to me to be in an unusually flourishing state: its customers were confined to the people of the place, and the prices charged were moderate; after the arrival of the foreign hordes towards the end of 1915, what a change came over Floca's! From the early forenoon until midnight the place was thronged with humanity, mostly officers of the Allied forces; from three to six p.m. was perhaps the busiest time, and one found some difficulty in obtaining a seat then. During the summer months a military band, either French or Italian, would play for two hours every Saturday afternoon, and Floca's would be the favourite rendezvous for everybody living in or passing through Salonique; it was also the trysting-place for nurses and their gallant cavaliers, for tea, cakes, and ices

were to be obtained there. In the early evening one would occasionally see a few ladies of the Levant, expensively dressed and lavishly perfumed, accompanied by their male belongings, sipping Turkish coffee or partaking of an ice; these people would sit for hours over their one "consommation," time to them, being made for slaves, and other people's wants not to be considered, and when they departed, the men would wrangle over the bill, and leave without tipping the waiter, which omission did not appear to cause the waiters distress, when there was so much foreign prey at their mercy.

The scale of prices at Floca's was a sliding one, adjusted according to the nationality of the customer, Englishmen being looked upon as the easiest subjects for extortion; during the crowded hours it was largely a matter of luck (or temperament) if one obtained one's rightful change; after a certain amount of experience in the business methods of the Café Floca, I became what might be termed canny when paying my bill: if, after tendering a five or ten drachmæ note, I received no change within a reasonable time, I made it my practice to vacate my seat, at the same time ostentatiously taking with me a plated sugar bowl, a few teaspoons, or on occasion, a teapot, and then move through the throng towards the door. This act invariably had the required effect, for a waiter would run after me, gesticulating with vigour and jabbering loudly: I would demand my change in few words, it would be produced and apologies profusely tendered, the sugar bowl, teaspoons, or what not would be returned to the waiter, and life would proceed as usual. I may mention here that it was not long before I became known to the waiters at Floca's, and I was never robbed of my money openly, once I was known.

Several times was the Café Floca *consigné*, or placed out of bounds, by the French military authorities, for extortionate charges; this meant that

no officer or man of the Allied forces could enter Floca's, and it was a pathetic sight on those occasions of disgrace, to see this busy centre of life in Salonique reduced to a clientèle of a few Jews and civilians. This sad state of affairs, however, never lasted for long : the charges would be reduced and Messrs. Floca *frères* would come to heel whining, and once more would their portals be opened for the custom of *messieurs les officiers alliés*.

The being *consigné* of Floca's reminds me of an amusing incident which was detrimental to the dignity of a naval officer of senior rank. This officer was in the habit of walking from his office to Floca's at about eleven a.m. daily, Sundays included, and there partaking of his matutinal cocktail, or what passed for a cocktail at that hostelry. He was an officer of much dignity and pride, accustomed to order and to be obeyed ; he arrived one morning at the Café Floca as usual, and ordered his posset : the waiter declined to serve him, he sent for the manager and demanded an explanation, which was to the effect that the establishment had been *consigné* by the French authorities, and he regretted that he was unable to serve monsieur. This officer then rose and departed, and to add insult to injury, as he was leaving Floca's a military policeman approached him, gravely saluted, and regretted that it would be his duty to report to the Provost-Marshal that he had entered Floca's contrary to the regulations, and would he please give him his name and ship ! The rest is silence.

Another centre of life in Salonique was the English Quay. This was the portion of the quay in the inner harbour which was reserved for the use of British ships : the transports, great and small, would be berthed at this quay, and all troops and animals embarked and disembarked. Here was the habitat of the naval transport officers and the military landing officers (short titles, N.T.O. and M.L.O.), and their

name was legion, among them being some quaint and original characters.

Work was carried on at the quay night and day, weekdays and Sundays, even Christmas Day being no exception, and many were the amusing incidents I saw during the three years that I lived and had my being on and about the English Quay, Salonique. If I were to attempt to relate all that I had seen during that time I should fill a large book, but as that is not my intention at present, I will limit myself to describing incidents and characters as they occur to my mind.

There was, for instance, "Farmer Giles." Who that was acquainted with the naval side of Salonique life did not know him? A worthy naval officer, not undistinguished in the field of valour, but a decidedly quaint character: he had one hobby in life, and that was the study of an Oriental language, and one vice, meanness. His sobriquet was acquired in this manner: in the early days of the occupation of Salonique, this officer arrived and took up his duties, and on his first appearance on the English Quay he was so quaintly garbed that an irreverent officer there and then dubbed him "Farmer Giles," a nickname which stuck to him through his long sojourn in Salonique. It was a warm summer day, and his "rig of the day" was an ill-fitting suit of ordnance khaki drill: he wore black boots and khaki putties, one of the latter having slipped down to his ankle. I do not recollect ever having seen both putties in place at the same time, one invariably being down and the other up. On his head was a peculiar sun hat; apparently unable to obtain a regulation helmet, he had purchased a local production, which did not add to his personal appearance. It was of a pale yellow colour, in shape circular, and its brim was about a foot in width and stood out almost at right-angles to the crown. This picturesque head-dress was worn slightly tilted to the back, giving one a view of the wearer's rosy,

cherubic face, which he never managed to entirely shave; there were always little tufts of stray whisker sprouting here and there, like cactus in the desert, on cheek, lip, or chin, as though the edge of the razor with which he shaved were notched. He wore a Sam Browne belt, the buckle of which was never in the right position, being either a little to port or starboard of the midship line of his body, and the belt itself was below his waist in front, and above it behind; to complete the picture he always carried a stout cudgel of a walking-stick, and smoked a large and evil-smelling pipe.

Such was the figure which burst upon the English Quay that bright summer morning, and is it to be wondered at that he was immediately christened "Farmer Giles?" He was an officer of senior rank, quite oblivious of his surroundings, and I do not think that he was aware of his nickname during the whole time he was at Salonique.

His mode of life was strange, and the cause of much amusement among us. Most naval officers employed on duties ashore were accommodated in hotels, but food was not provided in these places so most of us took our lunch and dinner at the Cercle Française, a restaurant and club established by the French for the benefit of officers of the Allied forces, and the food provided was good, and reasonable in price. "Farmer Giles" preferred to make his own arrangements, which consisted of purchasing tinned comestibles from the canteen, and preparing them in his room at the hotel with the help of a small oil stove which he possessed. He would make stews and other unsavoury messes, the odour from which would permeate the floor of the hotel in which we lived, adding yet another joy to life.

He had been observed to snap up from the quay such unconsidered trifles as onions and potatoes, and place them in his pocket: from that receptacle to the pot on his stove, the transition was an easy one, and

no doubt they added a zest to his *olla podrida*. He had an inordinate thirst for gin, of which he would consume as much as he could obtain—from other people—and seemingly without ill effects. On the rare occasions when he returned the compliment, his bottle, when produced, would contain just sufficient for one small peg each, and he made it a practice to water the Angostura bitters in order that a bottle should last the longer. As he was not a young man, and unmarried, we assumed that he was saving sufficient money to be able to retire after the war, and indulge his old age with the luxuries of which he had deprived his youth, which is, in my opinion, a pernicious and short-sighted policy, for there is always the prospect of developing into a chronic dyspeptic in one's age!

Such was one of the characters of the English Quay: there were others, of whom I may have something to say as this narrative progresses.

An amusing incident in connection with the disembarkation of mules occurs to me. A transport was alongside the quay and the work of disembarkation was in progress. The officer from the Remount depot who was taking charge of the mules was a colonel, who in private life was a well-known *Punch* artist, so it is certain that he saw the humour of what I am about to relate: the naval officer superintending the operations was a commander, and a popular character in the life of Salonique. Having nothing to do at the moment, I joined these two officers and stood watching the mules being led ashore. Mules are strange creatures, and I have always been interested in them—from a safe distance—and I cherished the hope that by watching them then, I might see something amusing.

I was not disappointed: the animals were walking ashore down what is termed a brow, in other words, a gangplank, and behaving fairly well for mules, although an occasional one would have a fit of

stubbornness when half-way down the brow, and require a little persuasion. The method of persuasion generally employed was to pass a rope round the hindquarters of the mule, and then bring both ends to the quay, where a dozen lusty lads would "tail on" and haul Mr. Mule down the brow in a sitting posture!

The colonel and commander were exchanging views as to the efficacy of various methods of handling mules; the colonel knew his subject from long experience, and gave it as his opinion that a mule was a wilful beast, and had no soul. The commander, actuated, no doubt, by humanitarian motives, was of opinion that much could be done by kindness, and was waiting for an opportunity to put his principles into practice. During the course of this friendly chat, a mule displayed a certain amount of reluctance to go ashore, stood still when half-way down the brow, and refused to be persuaded to continue his journey; the man leading him turned round and pulled at his halter, at the same time calling that mule very rude names; but to no purpose. The colonel was about to give the order to put a rope round him and pull him ashore in the time-honoured manner when the commander saw his opportunity.

"Colonel," said he, "that is not the right way to handle those mules, and I am going to take a hand; that man is looking at the mule and all animals are scared by the human eye, you know; he should walk ahead of the mule and keep a steady strain on the halter, and then the beast will follow him. You watch me bring that mule ashore."

"Good man, commander," replied the colonel, winking at me, "you get busy and we'll watch you; if you get that mule ashore with your methods, the cocktails will be on me."

Away walked the commander, and up the brow he went: taking the halter from the man who was leading the mule, he said something to him, which, as

far as we gathered, was on the subject of the human eye; he then turned his back on the mule, put a strain on the halter, and made strange noises with his mouth, intended, apparently, to encourage the animal to follow him. This had the required effect, for the mule took a couple of paces down the brow, and once more halted. The commander, true to his principles, never turned round to see what was happening, but continued to make strange noises and pull on the rope. The mule had other ideas, though, for he lifted one fore leg and planted a vigorous kick just south of the commander's equator, which sent him sprawling to the foot of the brow, amidst loud cheers and laughter from the onlookers. He gathered himself together, looked at the mule, who had now walked ashore without any assistance, and rejoined the colonel and myself; when asked "what about the power of the human eye now, old man?" his reply was brief and profane, but it gave us the impression that his faith had not made him whole, but decidedly sore, and that he regarded all the mule creation as sanguinary brutes, devoid of manners!

In order to vary the monotony of life in this land of the *comitadji* we alien dwellers devised a form of sport which had for its object the extermination of the feline tribe of Salonique. Those humane people who read this horrible story of the indiscriminate slaughter of poor puss, must not regard the Salonique cats as the domestic pet we all, or most of us, are fond of and encourage to our domiciles; the cats of Salonique are a race apart, just as the dogs of Constantinople were not as the dogs of civilization.

In all my wanderings up and down the earth, and to and fro in it, never have I seen such cats; they prowled about the streets of the city in their hundreds and thousands; gaunt, bony, yellow cats, mangy white cats, grim, vicious, black Thomas cats, their ribs sticking out like the ribs of a poor man's dog; in fact, all the race of lewd, obscene felines that it is

possible to imagine. These pariahs of the cat world made night hideous with their raucous voices: just as one was dozing off to sleep on a hot night, after expelling an invading mosquito from the net, one would be rudely awakened by the song of a solitary cat, then two cats, then more cats, and then some. These hymns of praise, songs of love, nocturnes, or what you will, varied in volume and power, but were of sufficient intensity to awaken the sleeper, and what is more, keep him awake.

It was with the avowed intention of mitigating this evil that the cat hunt was instituted, and judging by results, our apparently cruel sport was justified. Before instituting the cat hunt proper, we had made feline life in the neighbourhood of our hotel somewhat precarious; we saved all empty bottles (now is the opportunity for the prohibition party to say a few words) filled them with water (loud applause from the same party) then corked them. This ammunition we stacked beside our bedroom windows, ready for immediate action. The night would grow late, we officers would retire to our respective rooms and prepare for slumber, and for a time all would be quiet; then suddenly the peace of the still Macedonian night would be rudely disturbed by the clarion voice of a feline soloist on amour intent: figures in pyjamas would appear at windows and on balconies, electric torches would flash to and fro searching for the offenders, then—crash, crash, crash—and the sound of breaking glass would be mingled with meows of terror and pain from the surprised cats, and the rest would be silence.

One or two of us would descend to the street to examine the bag, which consisted generally of

Item: 1 cat—dead.

Item: 2 cats—wounded.

The latter we would put out of their misery with a revolver bullet.

The Greek or Macedonian brigand who kept the

А.П.О.



BEHOLD, HOW GOOD IT IS FOR BRETHERN TO DWELL TOGETHER IN UNITY.
Psalms.

hotel raised an objection to our conduct at first, but he was promptly disposed of with threats of being *consigné* by the A.P.M. and the remark "*a la guerre comme a la guerre.*"

These local efforts of ours were good so far as they went, but they did not go far enough, so we extended them by organizing the cat hunt proper, which was a regular nocturnal battle, of great efficacy, carried out in this manner :

At about eleven p.m. of a fine summer night, a party of three or four, with two guns (.22 Winchester), would proceed to the back streets, alleys, lanes, graveyards or any other place where we were likely to come upon our quarry, and once on the scent, we would stalk our prey. A cat would be discovered sleeping on a doorstep : he was quickly, quietly and expeditiously dispatched ; two cats engaged in amorous converse would be sighted in the distance, one of the hunters would detach himself from the main body, so to speak, and stealthily approach *les amants* ; arriving at a point of vantage, he would launch the attack : two shots in quick succession, and two more pussy-cats had departed from this vale of strife. Graveyards were always good hunting places, for the feline tribe appeared to regard them as suitable spots in which to settle all their affairs, both of the heart and of honour, and the cats would be so numerous there, that with two guns we had no difficulty in bagging four or five.

When I left Salonique after the Armistice, the tale of defunct cats was considerable, for which the natives should be profoundly grateful, but gratitude, like cleanliness, is alien to their nature. This account of our cat-hunting reminds me of another story which is, I think, worth relating : this one is about a monkey.

His name was Herbert, and what is more, he answered to his name ; among the men he was known as 'Erb, and 'Erb was a character. He was a large

animal, his body covered with thick brown fur, with the exception of the after end of it, which was bare and scarlet, giving him a picturesque appearance. He belonged to the lieutenant in command of a torpedo boat, and was well known in Salonique naval circles. Herbert had two very pronounced vices, tobacco and alcohol, and I do but state a fact when I remark that he, the monkey or ape, smoked a pipe, and furthermore, he regarded the wine when it was red, that is to say, he boozed; I had a long acquaintance with Herbert and I know.

My first meeting with this very intelligent ape was like this: I was visiting the torpedo boat which claimed 'Erb as one of her crew, sitting in the ward-room partaking of my matutinal ginger beer, when my attention was drawn to a strange animal coming down the ladder leading to the ward-room; being a strict teetotaller, I knew that I was not "seeing things," and wondered if this were a new type of temporary naval officer, for hostilities only: but no, a closer inspection convinced me that what I saw before my eyes was a large monkey, or more correctly one of the tribe of the "cynocephali," or dog-faced baboons.

This animal walked into the ward-room, squatted beside his master, and gazed around at the officers present, at the same time making strange sounds in his throat. These sounds were evidently understood by his master, for he ordered a glass of port and handed it to 'Erb, who solemnly took it in both hands, carefully carried it to his mouth, all the time making weird noises, and with every sign of appreciation, he slowly sipped the wine until he had consumed it, and then handed the empty glass to his master, who placed it on the table. We resumed our conversation, but Herbert was restless; he pulled at the leg of his master's trousers, and again made strange sounds as though he were trying to speak Welsh, until notice was taken of him; his wants appeared to be under-

stood, for his master opened a drawer and took from it a clay pipe, which he proceeded to fill with tobacco : this done, he wiped the stem on his coat sleeve, put the pipe in his mouth and lit it, 'Erb all the time watching with attention and giving utterance to what seemed to be expressions of pleased anticipation ; the pipe well alight, it was handed to Herbert, who at once seized it, placed it in his mouth, and sat there, puffing out smoke and thoroughly enjoying it.

He occasionally removed the pipe from his mouth, but never allowed it to go out ; I had never before seen a monkey smoking, and made some remark to that effect, but I was assured that 'Erb both smoked and drank as regular habits.

On one occasion some thoughtless person had left the key of the wine locker in the lock, and the consequences were disastrous ; at this time the torpedo boat was lying alongside the depot ship, and the captain and other officers were in the ward-room of that ship, consequently the torpedo boat's ward-room was deserted ; the wily Herbert saw his opportunity and made the most of it, for later in the evening, on returning to the T.B., the door of the wine locker was found open, 'Erb lying beside it fast asleep, with a broken port wine bottle beside him, quite empty ! There was no doubt about it : 'Erb was drunk and must be punished, so he was rudely awakened, beaten, then driven in disgrace from the ward-room, and as a further punishment, I learned that his grog would be stopped for a week !

When in port, the torpedo boats generally lay at anchor a short distance from the depot ship, and on occasions, when the commanding officer of this particular T.B. was in the ward-room of that ship, someone would suggest sending for 'Erb : a signal would be made to the T.B. something like this :

From Captain to Officer of the Watch,
T.B.—Please send Herbert across with all dispatch.

The T.B.'s dinghy would be manned, 'Erb would take his seat in the stern sheets, and she would shove off.

Arrived alongside the accommodation ladder of the depot ship, 'Erb would spring out of the boat, nip up the ladder and on to the quarter-deck, and generally take the shortest cut to the ward-room, which was via the skylight, and once there he would look for his master, who would shout out: "Salaam, 'Erb, salaam," whereupon the old monkey would cover his face with both hands, and solemnly bow himself to the deck two or three times, in imitation of an Oriental salaam; that stunt over, he would proceed to make the life of the ward-room cat a burden, until the unhappy feline sought refuge in flight.

Herbert was the proud possessor of a canvas belt embellished with the letters A.P.M. in red bunting; this belt was worn, with a leash attached, on those occasions when Herbert *fait se promener*, with his master. This belt was black in colour with red lettering, in imitation of the brassard worn by Assistant Provost-M Marshals, military officers of whom the captain of this T.B. did not approve.

Herbert and his master had been making the promenade one afternoon, and while waiting for a boat they entered the famous White Tower Gardens restaurant, and there partook of liquid refreshment: that is to say, the monkey's master did, Herbert sitting quietly beside him on a chair, apparently interested in the passers-by.

While sitting thus, an A.P.M. sauntered past the table, then stopped and looked hard at the monkey; with an expression of annoyance on his face, he approached the captain of the T.B. and demanded that he remove the offensive belt from the monkey as he was bringing the King's uniform into ridicule. "In what way?" he was asked. "That," said the A.P.M., pointing to 'Erb's belt with the red letters. "Oh, that," said —, "why, you're quite mistaken,

those letters stand for 'a prize monkey,' and I put it to you, isn't he one?" That A.P.M. fled.

Poor old 'Erb! I knew him well and loved him despite his alcoholic habits. I have known many humans with less intelligence than that ape, and many I liked less. If he be still alive he has served in a ship of war quite long enough to entitle him to at least a General Service Medal, if not an O.B.E.

I suppose that every officer, naval and military, within a radius of ten miles of the English Quay, either knew personally or had heard of "Chas." Of course that was not his name, but merely the American abbreviation of Charles, and it was due to the fact that he had spent some years of his very varied life in the Panama Canal Zone, and had, in consequence, acquired a very pronounced United States accent, together with a considerable knowledge of the vernacular of that country.

"Chas" was no longer in the dawn of manhood: he was not even in its prime; he admitted to one and sixty summers, and looked more, but nevertheless, he was as active and vigorous as most men are at forty-five. Work to him was a joy, and he revelled in it: no duty was too irksome for "Chas" to carry out, and yet I have reason to think that he was not appreciated by his seniors.

One of his amusements in his hours of leisure was horse riding, and although but an indifferent horseman myself, and therefore no critic, I was told by experts that "Chas" was a good man on a horse, and rode well. As he was in the habit of remarking: "Sons, at my time of life I am more interested in horses than I am in women." To see old "Chas" start off on one of his equestrian excursions was a sight not to be missed, and as many of us as could manage it would be present. He tipped the beam at about fourteen stone, so required a sturdy mount: an orderly would arrive, riding one horse and leading another for "Chas," who would appear on the scene

clad in his usual khaki rig, with the addition of spurs, and carrying a heavy crop. He would then proceed to an inspection of his steed, tightening a girth a little, shortening a stirrup leather, examining the horse's mouth, and finding all to his satisfaction, would dismiss the orderly with the remark: "Fine and dandy son, fine and dandy"; he would then gather up the reins, mount, and ride off amid the applause of the spectators.

I never knew "Chas" to come a cropper from his horse; he would ride up hill and down dale at full speed, race with anything that he met on the road, and yet turn up smiling. On the only occasion that I rode with "Chas" all went smoothly for some time; we ambled pleasantly through the outskirts of Salonika and reached the open country, then we parted company; "Chas" was endeavouring to persuade me to a race, but I was not for it, being, as before stated, but an indifferent horseman, and wishing to return to duty sound in wind and limb; during the process of persuasion, a motor-car passed at speed, startled "Chas's" horse, which bolted. The last I saw of the gallant old warrior, he was going eyes out after the motor-car, enveloped in a cloud of dust, and that dust no doubt was blue with his imprecations; I returned alone from my ride, but "Chas" turned up smiling a little after me, and remarked that he "guessed he had taught that little old horse a lesson, for he galloped off at his own wish, but, gee whiz, sons, I made him gallop all the way back to please me!"

"Chas" was responsible for a brother officer and myself spending a decidedly *mauvaise quart d'heure*, and the story is worth relating, although it is against the writer. The occasion was a fine cold afternoon of autumn, and being at a loose end a brother officer suggested that we take the car and go for a joy ride. As he was evidently fed up with the office, and I was equally weary of loafing about the quay with nothing

to do, I readily assented to the proposal, and we sent for the car.

While we were waiting, our old friend "Chas" ambled alongside us, and hearing that we were going for a drive he suggested that we should call on the nurses in the Sisters' Convalescent Rest Camp, assuring us that they were always pleased to see officers from the base. This Rest Camp was situated on the slopes of Mount Hortiac, and as the road was a good one and the scenery very fine, we decided to take that route, and left the call at the Rest Camp an open question, although "Chas" assured us that the "little old sisters" would be real glad to see us, and appreciated a visit from officers who were passing, as they were a long way from anywhere, and would be glad to hear the latest Salonika "chat."

The car arrived and we pushed off, thoroughly enjoying the keen mountain air and the picturesque scenery en route; we discussed the pros and cons of "Chas's" suggestion: frankly, I was opposed to butting in among a crowd of strange women, and said so, but my companion, who was a recent arrival at Salonika, thought it would only be doing a courteous act to "make our number" at the Rest Camp, so I reluctantly agreed, and we gave our driver instructions to pull up at the Sisters' Convalescent Camp.

After about half an hour's drive we arrived at our destination, feeling that we should at any rate be offered a cup of tea; we descended before a large marquee and requested an orderly to direct us to the sisters' mess tent: he indicated the large marquee, so we advanced to the attack, my companion leading, and my dog—a Welsh terrier—bringing up the rear. We entered the tent and stood at the entrance, expecting someone to approach and give us an opportunity to make ourselves known, and while we waited we took the occasion to gaze around us. The marquee was very comfortably fitted up: rugs on the floor, cosy looking armchairs scattered about, small

tables with books, papers, and periodicals, a piano at one side, and oil stoves adding an air of homeliness. Seated at the far end of the tent in close proximity to a stove, were two or three sisters engaged in animated conversation with the same number of budding generals; scattered about in groups were other fair damsels engaged in taking tea, reading, and conversation; near where we stood was a corpulent sister seated upon a three-legged stool, her back towards us (there was quite a lot of it, too), her attention concentrated upon the manipulation of a gramophone, which was emitting unpleasant sounds.

And so we stood at gaze, thinking, doubtless, of those words of Milton's,

"They also serve who only stand and wait,"

but for the life of us we failed to see what purpose we were serving by standing and waiting, but there we stood, and nobody took the slightest notice of us. The fair virgins continued their conversation and their work, the plump damsel went on with the good work at the gramophone, and our presence was ignored, except for an occasional glance of curiosity in our direction.

By this time I was beginning to feel peevish and said to my companion, *sotto voce*: "Let's beat it, old son, we're *de trop* in this *galère*," but he was not so easily defeated, and declined to accept my gentle hint. We stood there, as unwelcome as relations, waiting for a sign of recognition, but none came, and there they sat

"All silent and all damned."

At last, just as the situation was becoming acute, and when even my dog was evincing a desire to sleep, a demure maiden, with the air of a startled fawn, entered the tent, and seeing us standing in her way she attempted to withdraw again, but she was not

quick enough, for my companion, determined not to suffer ignominious defeat at the hands of a few females, turned to her and said, in his deep, booming voice : " Good afternoon," and proceeded to explain who we were and the object of our visit. The young woman, who had the air of having been a housemaid in private life, and spoke ungrammatical English with a pronounced Scottish accent, asked us if we would sit down and take a cup of tea, all the time regarding us with a look of fear, and obviously hoping that we would decline her offer.

Her hopes were doomed to disappointment, for we were determined to have our share of what fun there was to be had ; we accepted her offer with alacrity, sat down and entered into conversation, but it was hard work, and we soon gave it up and made our adieux. As we left the tent we turned our eyes upon the fleshy female, and found that she was still enraptured with the gramophone ; the other occupants of the marquee were intent upon their various affairs, and our well-meaning visit had been a failure. We walked to our car, took our seats, and whistled for the dog, for I was somewhat apprehensive that he might, in retaliation for such lack of hospitality, decide to take a bite at the overhanging portion of the fat lady at the gramophone ; had he done so base a deed, I could not in my heart have blamed him !

As we drove away from that scene of hospitable revelry, we could hear the gramophone making a noise like a two step, and my companion looked at me more in sorrow than in anger and remarked : " The next time that I visit a hospital will be when I am carried there in an ambulance, and not until ; as for that salt water impostor, Old Chas, I'll have his inside for a necktie when we meet." To which pious threat I murmured Amen !

My only trip to the front during the years of my service at Salonika was for the express purpose of witnessing a performance of the very justly famous

pantomime of the 28th Division, then in its second season! As the trip was an interesting one, and the pantomime a remarkably fine production considering the place and the difficulties of producing it, I feel that these memories of mine would be incomplete without a reference to it.

I managed to obtain the necessary leave, and my friend, Major S——, did the rest, even to obtaining my military passport from the P.M., and I still preserve feelings of gratitude to him for all he did to make the trip a pleasant one. S—— had been stationed for some time on the particular front we were visiting, and knew everyone, I think, along the whole seventy odd kilometres of road; from which it may be inferred that the navy, as represented by myself, was in excellent hands, and the inference will be a correct one: I was. Being a good horseman, and possessed of a sound knowledge of horses, S—— had, during his service at the front, been in a position where that knowledge was of use, but of motors he was as ignorant as a Choctaw Indian is of conic sections, hence, with their absolute genius for fitting square pegs into round holes, our military mandarins had removed him from a position for which he was suited, and appointed him as Officer Commanding a M.T. Depot in Salonika, a place where horses were as rare as are icicles in hell.

We left Salonika one fine cold morning in the month of January, in a well tried Vauxhall car, with a good driver who knew the road; we had provided ourselves with plenty of rugs, for we should want them before the end of the journey, having to pass over a considerable range of hills of about three thousand feet in height, but as regards the inner man, S—— had an abiding faith in military human nature, as exemplified in the persons of his many friends en route, and trusted to them to supply us with the necessary food, whisky, and other groceries that we might require, and I may as well state, here and now,

that his faith was justified, for we were everywhere received with hospitality, and departed from among those soldiermen fed and satisfied.

We negotiated the rough, narrow streets of Salonika without accident, passing through the refugee village of Lembet, where an expert driver is required to guide one without accident through the crowds of children who appear to be determined to commit suicide beneath the wheels of every car that passes, their parents and elders sitting at the roadside placidly watching them and apparently hoping for the worst, as they would then obtain monetary compensation for the loss of a child, such being the subtle nature of the gentle Macedonian.

Our first call was at the Base Horse Transport Depot, where we spent about half an hour in the officers' mess, and then continued our journey, promising to call on our return trip the next day ("That is, if you're not done in by a Bulgar shell," shouted the colonel as we moved off). The only remark that I will permit myself to make in regard to that mess is that the submarine blockade had not visibly affected their supply of whisky, so we were able to observe that fine old Scottish custom that has stood the test of time! With the colonel's cheery valediction ringing in our ears, we proceeded on our journey, and shaped a course for a M.T. Company situated some twenty odd kilometres farther on, and as we were now about to take the Seres Road, it will not be amiss if I digress a little and give my impressions of that famous highway, although I am aware that many abler pens than mine have been devoted to the task.

Beyond the hills that border Salonika to the north lies the rich, fertile plain of Langaza, and after passing through the Durbend Pass, one sees, like a white ribbon, stretching for miles across that plain, and winding up the distant hills beyond, the famous road called Seres, ever leading towards the town of

that name, but never taking us quite there. This road was originally made by French engineers about 1908, and served the Greeks well in the second Balkan War, but it was of light construction, and when the British commenced to use it early in the campaign, it broke up completely, so the Royal Engineers set to and remade and remetalled it completely for a distance of about seventy kilometres. The drainage is a masterpiece of engineering, and despite the climatic conditions of the Balkans, the road is practically dry a few hours after the heaviest rainstorm that the country can produce.

From Salonika to Guvezne (about twenty-six kilometres) the traffic is assisted by the railway, but from there to the front (about forty-five kilometres) the Seres Road is the only means of conveying all material, mails, ammunition, etc., to an army seldom less than fifty thousand men, and when it is taken into consideration that the means of transport were heavy motor lorries (three tons), convoys of them being constantly on the road in all weathers, it will be easily understood that the Seres Road was an expensive, but very necessary item to maintain.

If some of the cheerful idiots in England who, to use an Americanism, were so constantly "shooting their mouth" about Salonika could have been taken there and shown the work and the difficulties to be overcome, they would perhaps have returned wiser and quieter men. Day and night throughout the year sections of the road were under repair; prisoners of war, native men and women of the country, and a small number of Engineers under control of an officer of the Royal Engineers, carrying out the work. As we sped on our way to the front, we would pass a military policeman with a red and green flag, by means of which he would regulate the traffic, then we would see a lorry converted into a water cart at work, then a steam roller, the familiar brass unicorn with the word "Invicta" on the front of it, bringing to my mind

visions of English country lanes in spring, the hawthorn pink and white with bloom, and the green fields stretching away on either side as far as the eye could see, dotted here and there with farm-houses, and in the distance a cluster of thatched cottages and the square, ivy-clad tower of the village church, standing in its small God's acre, where lie at rest the rude forefathers of the hamlet. Strange indeed that such memories should be evoked by the sight of so prosaic a thing as a steam roller working on a road in the Macedonian wilderness!

And having digressed to this extent, we will continue the journey to Kopriva, which was the name of the village to which we were bound. Our next halting place was somewhere in the vicinity of kilometre thirty at a M.T. Company commanded by an officer not altogether unknown in the boxing world; evidence of his hobby was visible in the shape of a well constructed ring in the dump, where he could encourage his stout lads to practise the noble art. On reaching his hut he informed us, with a tremor in his voice, that a recent army order had placed an interdict upon the consumption of strong waters before lunch; naturally such grave tidings shook us, and I suppose that our faces betrayed to him the fact that we were profoundly moved, for he at once bade us be of good cheer, and explained that the order had occasioned a certain amount of inconvenience in his mess, but the difficulty had been overcome by the simple expedient of altering the hour of lunch from noon to ten a.m. and as it was then eleven a.m. would we—er—er?—we would, and we did!

After that we once more took the road, our idea being to reach the dugouts of some friends of S—— where we were fairly certain of obtaining lunch, and with that object in view we bade the driver open out the car and make up for lost time. We made good speed along the road and were able to enjoy the magnificent scenery we were passing through; the

road wound up the hillside for about three thousand feet, passing the villages of Likovan and Lahana, both of them scenes of heavy fighting in former Balkan wars. Descending once more to sea-level we reached Orljak bridge, which crosses the Struma River, and is the line of demarcation between the lines of communication area and the area of the 16th Army Corps; the bridge was well guarded and a sentry examined our passports before we were allowed to proceed, neither officer nor man being permitted to cross the bridge without authority.

We reached our objective somewhat late for lunch, but despite that, our military friends did us very well, and also turned our driver over to those who would attend to his wants; having lunched and rested, we once more got under way, and made a detour in order to call on some friends of S——, for whom he had brought with him some sporting cartridges. Having found them, and time not being pressing, we went out and watched some of their men playing football, and while the play was in progress we heard gun-fire, and looking aloft, we saw a combat between a Hun aeroplane and one of our own machines; the Hun made off apparently undamaged, and our machine descended to his aerodrome, also undamaged, so once more we turned our attention to the football.

The football over, we again continued our journey, and at about 5 p.m. we reached the little village of Kopriva, in which quaint little spot the pantomime took place. On arrival in the village we found several cars and other indications that the performance was going to be well patronized that night, so we made for the hostel where we intended to sleep; this had originally been the residence of the local "papa" or priest of the Greek Church, and it had been taken in hand by the army and converted into a rest-house for officers visiting Kopriva; there were two or three rooms containing two beds each, but these were for sybarites; the stable, containing a couple of dozen

camp-beds and army blankets, was the most popular sleeping accommodation, and one had to order a bed in advance even there; my guide, companion, and friend had ordered a room to be reserved for us, so I was indeed a privileged guest.

Attached to this primitive hotel was a large out-house which had been converted into a dining-room, and there one could obtain a very good meal for a small sum, thanks to the army canteen, which supplied all the necessaries for consoling the inner man. It was the custom to partake of tea, bread and butter or jam, before the show, which commenced at six p.m., and afterwards to the refectory, where a good substantial dinner was served to all those officers who had been to the theatre.

After disposing of our kit in the luxurious bedroom allotted to us, we adjourned to the dining-hall and made a good tea; that finished, we made our way to the theatre, which was an old, dilapidated barn, long since past its prime, but which had been patched and repaired by the Royal Engineers, so that it made a good theatre. A donkey engine had been procured to generate steam for a small dynamo for lighting the theatre, so everything was in real West End style; the entire production was the work of privates and non-commissioned officers of the 28th Division, and the music, book, and lyrics were by certain of the performers. The orchestra was composed of members of the regimental bands of the Division, the scenery was painted by three privates, and wigs and costumes had been sent out from England. The pantomime was our old friend "Bluebeard" brought up to date, and the whole production was a credit to those responsible for it, and speaking for myself, I can frankly state that I have seen many professional shows which were inferior to the famous pantomime of the 28th Division. I do not propose to weary my readers by attempting to write a dramatic criticism, principally because I would not if I could, for the show

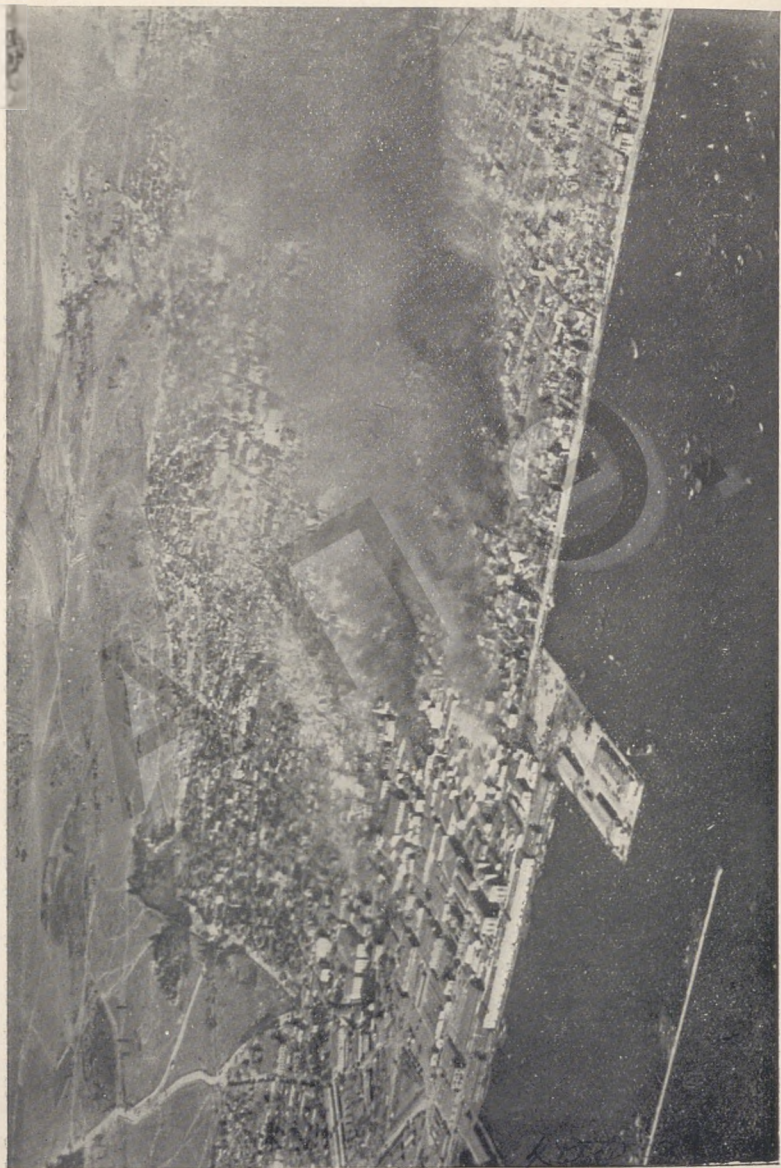
was not a professional one, but one got up by soldiers for soldiers and their friends, in order to make an occasional break in the monotony of life in the Balkans.

I cannot conclude this account of my trip to the front without relating the following story, which is not an effort of imagination, but a statement of fact. A few days before my visit a Boche aeroplane had been brought down in our lines, and one of the occupants was captured uninjured; orders were given for him to be taken to the base at Salonika, but before going, this young Hun officer said that he had a request to make, and would he be permitted to make it? His request was that he might be permitted, before being taken to Salonika, to see a performance of the pantomime of the 28th Division of the British Army, as he had heard of its fame even in Berlin! I was given to understand that he was permitted to witness a performance, and that he thoroughly appreciated it.

After the show S—— and I made for the hostel, and there did justice to its cuisine, afterwards visiting the authors and some of the players in their tents, where we spent an hour discussing their work with them, and so to bed, as Pepys was in the habit of remarking. Early in the morning we were awakened by the sound of gunfire, and on jumping out of bed and going into the yard we found that the Bulgars and ourselves were engaged in a mutual Hymn of Hate, but so far as we knew, no casualties were incurred on that occasion.

We left Kopriva shortly after breakfast on our return journey, calling at the same places en route as we did on the outward trip, and receiving the same hospitality. We reached Salonika before dark, sound in wind and limb, not even having sustained a punctured tyre throughout our journey, and so ended what was to me a very enjoyable and memorable jaunt, and a pleasant break in the monotony of life at the base.

А.П.О.



THE BURNING OF SALONIKA, AUGUST 1917: VIEWED FROM THE AIR.

So far as I know, the story of the burning of Salonika has not been written, and as these memories would not be complete without some reference to that catastrophe, I will describe what I saw of it and the impressions it left upon my mind.

It was indeed a great fire: one of the most appalling in modern times, and one must turn to the pages of Pepys and read his description of the great fire of London in order to thoroughly realize the position in Salonika during and after the fire of the 18th August, 1917. Occurring as it did during a great international upheaval and amidst the clash of arms, with far more weighty events to engage the chronicler, it is perhaps not surprising that so little was heard of it.

The only account of the conflagration that I have read was the one written in *The Balkan News* by the editor, Mr. H. C. Owen, and cabled to London by him. I have no doubt that his account, after being submitted to the tender mercies of the censor, left much to be desired in the way of information and truth, so even at this late date I will try to supplement that account, hoping that I have not been anticipated before this reaches the printer.

The fire originated in the north-west quarter of the city, and appears to have started in several places at once, whether by design or accident is not known, but personally I think the latter. The weather conditions were ideal for the spreading abroad of fire, the day being fine with a strong Vardar, or north-west wind blowing, which fanned the flames among the ramshackle, closely-built houses of that part of the city. The appliances for combating fire in the city of Salonika were meagre: in fact, useless; one of the quaint contraptions miscalled fire engines bore this legend: "Sun Fire Office, 1710," and I should imagine that it was not new at that date. The officers and men of the Allied Forces rigged hoses from tugs and other craft lying at the quay, but there

was a limit to the length of the hoses so they were of very little use, although they were instrumental in keeping the flames from the buildings on the quays.

A certain number of people must have lost their lives, but the exact number will never be known owing to the conditions under which so many of the population lived. I saw only two corpses myself, both old men, and neither of them bearing traces of having been burnt; they evidently succumbed to fright or exhaustion.

My own attention was drawn to the fire at about five o'clock in the afternoon of Saturday, the 18th August, from the flat roof of the Hôtel Continental, at which hostelry I had my room. There were four or five of us present, among them Owen, of *The Balkan News*; we watched the flames, fanned by the strong wind, spreading among the houses of the north-west portion of the city, and although we realized that a serious fire was in progress, there was nothing to indicate that the city would be devastated within a few hours, so after watching for about an hour we decided that the position was not grave enough to interfere with dinner, and with two brother officers I made my way to the hospitable Cercle Française, the evening rendezvous of most of the Allied officers at the base.

We lingered over our dinner until about nine o'clock, and on emerging from the club dining-room into the gardens we realized that the fire was indeed serious. Overhead there were thick, fiery clouds of sparks being driven onward by the strong wind, the road was filled with a surging throng of men, women, children, animals and vehicles, all moving from west to east in their effort to escape from the area of the fire, and carrying with them as much of their worldly property as was portable.

It was an impressive sight, a scene never to be forgotten, and might have been plucked from the pages of Josephus; many of the fleeing throng were

Jews, and in Salonika those people still wore their ancient garb, which added to the picturesqueness of the spectacle. There was no panic, and except for an occasional altercation, which was quickly subdued by the military police, the exodus of these children of Israel and elsewhere was conducted in an orderly manner.

The men were shouting and the women were wailing and filling the air with their lamentations, all in the most approved Biblical manner, but ever moving to the east. Small donkeys were staggering along under burdens which a self-respecting cart horse would have shied at: men and women were laden with as many of their household gods as they could carry, feather and flock beds having pride of place, and after them mirrors or anything fitted with a mirror; sewing machines also were burdens of honour, and after them came a heterogeneous collection of worthless rubbish which the poor wretches were determined to preserve with all their strength.

After watching this amazing procession for some time, I left my two companions, and in the words of Pepys: "So I down to the waterside, and there got a boat and saw a lamentable fire. Everybody endeavouring to remove their goods, and flinging into the river (sea) or bringing them into lighters that lay off; poor people staying in their houses as long as till the very fire touched them, and then running into boats, or clambering from one pair of stairs, by the waterside, to another."

And the particular boat which I entered conveyed me to my place of duty—the English Quay—where I found work to my hands in moving one of the transports to an anchorage in the bay, it appearing at that time as if the fire would reach the quay. Before returning to the shore I stood and watched the magnificent, awe-inspiring spectacle of the burning of the city of Salonika.

The night was dark and moonless, and the glare

of the fire illumined the summer sky with a weird, uncanny brilliance; occasionally there would be a great burst of dazzling flame leaping high above the rest, indicating where the fire in its onward progress had attacked a store of petrol. Conspicuous among the flames were the minarets of the mosques, standing out white and ghostly amid the red ruin of fire, like pillars of salt in a desert of glowing embers.

As I watched this pageant of fire spread out before me, my mind reverted to the past, and I pondered on the mysterious fatality that had hung over Salonika throughout the twenty-five centuries of her existence: of the plagues that had swept over her, the foreign hordes that had pillaged her; and a feeling of sadness came over me to see this old, historical city of evil destiny being once more devastated, for I had lived within her precincts for two years, and I felt that I had become a part of her. Truly she was destined to drain the cup of bitterness to the dregs.

I left the ship and returned to the quay, where I assisted to embark refugees into lighters and tugs, for conveyance to places remote from the fire, and where they could be accommodated in tents until other arrangements were made. The quay was crowded with these unfortunate people—Greeks, Jews, Armenians, Macedonians and various other picturesque rabble composing the population of Salonika—all burdened with portable property, and it required firmness to convince them that they would not be permitted to take this rubbish with them, for the available craft were not sufficient to carry other than human cargo. They shouted, they wept, they filled the still night air with their lamentations, but to no purpose, and so they, perforce, had to travel light.

Having disposed of these poor wretches, two or three of us walked to the Place de la Liberté, once the centre of the life of Salonika; here were the

hotels, the Café Floca, and Stein's Oriental Stores (a place of business which was out of bounds to all Allied troops owing to its enemy origin, and strange to relate, the only building in the area of the fire which escaped damage, although the flames swept over it and round it). Here, too, stood the hospitable Cercle des Etrangers—the only real club in Salonika, founded some forty years ago by the late Sir John Elijah Blunt, C.B., then Consul-General—and the scene of many convivial gatherings of British officers, naval and military, during the years of their sojourn in Salonika.

We stood and watched the familiar buildings disappear one by one: first came Floca's, then the flames swept across the street and consumed the Hôtel d'Angleterre, and it was with feelings of genuine regret that I saw the flames seize the Cercle des Etrangers and rapidly reduce the building to ashes and ruins.

The whole water front was now doomed, so we retreated from the Place de la Liberté and returned to the quay; climbing to the flat roof of the Custom House we viewed the fire as it spread along the front, and soon witnessed the destruction of the Splendid Palace, the best hotel in Salonika: Venizelos Street was an avenue of flame and the whole water front as far as the White Tower was one immense sheet of fire. It was magnificent, it was impressive, but the sight of such utter ruin was appalling, and the roar of the flames, and the crash of falling walls augmented the inferno.

The night wore on, a restless night of toil for us all, and day dawned on a scene of fire and smoke and desolation; the fire was now confined within a certain area, buildings having been blown down with dynamite in order to check its progress, but the area was a large one, and the ruins smouldered for many days before the fire was officially declared to be out. Fortunately the flames did not reach the quays or the

shipping, so the work of discharging the transports was resumed on the day following the outbreak. I was in Salonika for a period of eighteen months after the fire, but beyond clearing away part of the *débris*, little was done towards the work of reconstruction, and the old city was never the same.

To those who are possessed of a sense of humour, it is possible to extract amusement from the most tragic situations, and the burning of Salonika was no exception, as the following amusing incident will prove.

During the embarkation of the refugees I observed a steamboat to come alongside the quay, from which there landed an officer dressed in white, and whom I recognized as the captain of an Italian cruiser then at Salonika. He walked rapidly away from the quay, and in about fifteen minutes returned, accompanied by two ladies and two men, all of them in evening dress; they stood near the boat for a few minutes, talking volubly, and evidently greatly excited; then the officer in white detached himself from the others and approached me, and his remarks were, so far as I can recollect, something like this :

“Bon soir, mon capitaine, you speak ze Italiana?” I assured him that I had no Italian, but understood French, so the conversation proceeded in a mixture of that language and English.

“Zere is a pianoforte, what you play, comme ça (he made clear his meaning by going through the motions of playing the piano), and it belong a ces dames là, mes amies; soon it will burn, brulez, n'est ce pas, you understand me? we must sauver it, lentamente, and you will give ze man to porter ze pianoforte to ze canot—trasportare, porter, how you say in ze Inglese?—and me, I am so grateful, zank you ver much.” He spoke quickly and with much excitement, he gesticulated like an angry ape, and he had the appearance of being about to assault me. I addressed him in a *mélange* of English and French,

assuring him that we would do all that we could to save that pianoforte.

By this time he had been joined by the ladies and their male belongings, all of whom added their solicitations to his, and the burden of the song of this excited, mixed quintet was that I would save the pianoforte, what you play, *comme ça* !

I gathered together some of our men, to the infinite joy of the five, and led by the gallant capitano, we made our way to a house near the quay, into which we all went, and in what was obviously the drawing-room we found the precious pianoforte. The mariners seized the instrument and rolled it into the street, and with the assistance of a truck they soon transported it to the quay, and then carefully lowered it into the steamboat, where it was seized by the waiting crew.

The ladies were profuse in the expression of their gratitude; they smiled, they clapped their hands, they addressed me in complimentary terms as though I were the saviour of their country; their adulation was embarrassing, and had I been younger I feel sure that they would have embraced me. The pianoforte being now in comparative safety, the ladies embarked, attended by their cavaliers; they all bade me a lavish adieu, and the steamboat shoved off. As she disappeared in the darkness I heard the strains of the British National Anthem emanating from that instrument of much care, mingled with male and female voices singing.

I feel sure that the salvage of that pianoforte—what you play, *comme ça*—did much to strengthen the alliance between Italy and Great Britain, although I received no official assurance of the circumstance.

What the future may have in store for Salonika is problematical; it has been the scene of discord and turmoil throughout the centuries of its existence: an evil destiny appears to hover about it, and its possession has ever been a cause of dissension

among the surrounding nations. If the apparently ineluctable problem of the Balkans be ever solved, if the so-called concert of Europe ever perform in harmony, then will the destiny of this famous old city be known, but the state of Europe to-day does not encourage a feeling of optimism in regard to the harmonious solution of that problem, despite the clear thinking and profuse verbosity of the great, the wise, and the eminent.

TROOPING

Being Extracts from the Journal of a Naval Transport Officer

WITHIN six weeks of the commencement of hostilities, New Zealand had a force of some nine thousand men under arms and ready for active service; this in addition to the force she had already dispatched to Samoa.

Ten transports had been requisitioned and fitted as troopships, and by 24th September, 1914, troops, horses, and material were embarked, and the ships lay at anchor in Wellington Harbour awaiting sailing orders.

On 27th September we were ordered to disembark troops and horses and await further orders, so alongside the wharfs went the ships, the "boys" and their horses were disembarked, and they marched off to their camps to the strains of martial music (this, possibly, to drown their profanity), and all hands "marked time."

The reason for this alteration of programme I can only surmise, but having in mind the egregious blunders made in Egypt with the transport of the Expeditionary Force to Gallipoli, my surmise is not, I think, far from a statement of fact, more especially if one bear in mind the persistent underrating of the enemy by the great, wise, and eminent authorities in London.

My surmise was, briefly :

(a) Germany had a powerful cruiser squadron, based on China, and operating in the Pacific.

(b) The only British warships available to escort the New Zealand Expeditionary Force were three obsolete cruisers, and the New Zealand Government had objected to such inadequate protection for their troops, hence the delay.

For nearly three weeks we marked time, so to speak, then one fine day there appeared steaming into Wellington Harbour two large cruisers, one British and one Japanese. They had been ordered from China, whence they came with dispatch.

Once more troops and horses were embarked, the last farewells were spoken, the transports moved to an anchorage in the stream, and one grey, misty morning the convoy weighed anchor and proceeded to sea escorted by H.M.S.'s *Minotaur*, *Psyche*, and *Philomel*, and the large Japanese cruiser *Ibuki*.

Before proceeding to extract items from my journal, I will explain briefly the duties of a Naval Transport Officer, and in order to make myself clear, I think that I cannot do better than quote from the book entitled "Instructions for Officers of the Transport Service," issued by the Commissioners for executing the Office of Lord High Admiral of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, etc. (This grandiloquent title is the official designation for the British Admiralty.)

50. — appointed as transport officer in charge of a particular transport carrying troops. He will then be the representative of the Admiralty on board, and the medium of all communications between the master of the ship and the officer commanding the troops. He is to hoist his flag immediately on joining his ship.

There are other regulations regarding the duties of a Naval Transport Officer—to be precise, only eighty-four!—but the one above quoted will serve to indicate to the reader his general duties. I am sure that a quotation of the other eighty-three regulations

would make me unpopular. The ship to which I was appointed was of twelve thousand tons, one of the regular liners between London and New Zealand, and made a very fine troopship. Having embarked and caused my flag to be hoisted, in accordance with the printed instructions, I will proceed to my journal.

Friday, 16th October, 1914.

The convoy weighed and proceeded to sea at six-thirty a.m., escorted by H.M.S.'s *Minotaur*, *Psyche*, and *Philomel*, and H.I.J.M.S. *Ibuki*. The weather is dull and misty, with a light breeze, and as we steamed passed the forts at the Heads, we observed quite a crowd of people waving to us, despite the early hour, and a couple of small steamers accompanied us as far as the Heads, each crowded with people, cheering and waving as we passed out of the harbour, and determined to see the last of the "boys."

I subsequently learnt that among the spectators were the Governor and Lady Liverpool, who had turned out to see us off.

Saturday, 17th October, 1914.

Cold misty weather and a rough sea. The ships are keeping good station, considering that such work is new to most of the watch keeping officers. *Minotaur* is about five miles ahead of the convoy, which is disposed in two columns of five ships, each ship three cables apart, columns five cables; *Ibuki* is stationed two miles on our starboard beam, *Psyche* two miles to port, and *Philomel* is about a mile astern. Such is the disposition of the convoy at present, and the speed is ten knots.

Sunday, 18th October, 1914.

Heavy swell from the south-west, and dull cold weather. The ships are rolling considerably, and

there is much sea-sickness among the troops in consequence, but they'll soon get over that.

To-day inspected the ship fore and aft with the officer commanding troops, Lieut.-Colonel A. Bauchop, C.M.G.,¹ and everything appeared to be in satisfactory order. To-day being the Sabbath, divine service was held on deck, the military chaplain officiating. Had a yarn with B—— in his cabin this evening, and discovered that we had a taste in common for literature; we discussed the respective merits of G. B. Shaw, Maeterlinck, G. K. Chesterton, Brioux, and others, but found no bone of contention to dispute.

Spent an hour on the bridge, then had supper with the captain, and so to bed.

Monday, 19th October, 1914.

Weather still cold and misty, with heavy swell. All well, and nothing of interest to note.

Tuesday, 20th October, 1914.

Still cold and misty, with a rough sea. The "boys" are recovering from their sea-sickness, and are getting their sea legs; they all seem fit and cheery, and all goes well. We have on board nine hundred and seventy officers and men, and five hundred and sixty-nine horses, which is a fair crowd for so long a voyage: so far, the horses are doing well.

Wednesday, 21st October, 1914.

Made the coast of Tasmania at dawn, and at eleven o'clock this forenoon arrived at Hobart. As we required to replenish with fresh water, we went alongside the wharf: large and enthusiastic crowds to welcome us. Went for a walk with B——, posted letters, and returned to the ship for lunch. The troops went for a route march this afternoon, and at

¹ Killed at Gallipoli.

six p.m. we left the wharf and anchored in the bay. Fine warm day.

Thursday, 22nd October, 1914.

Attended a conference on board the *Maunganui* this afternoon, at which were present all naval transport officers, captains of the transports, and the senior naval officer in charge of the convoy, Captain E. B. Kiddle, R.N., who discussed with us details of the navigation of the ships on leaving here. The convoy left Hobart at four p.m. in fine weather, and with large crowds cheering us from the wharfs and foreshore. H.M.S. *Psyche* remained behind, her place being taken by a sister ship, H.M.S. *Pyramus*. Much fog all night, necessitating the use of fog buoys for keeping station, and I spent the night on the bridge.

Friday, 23rd October, 1914.

The fog lifted about four a.m., so I turned in for a few hours. Convoy in same formation as before, the station keeping good, and all goes well.

Saturday, 24th October, 1914.

Fine weather with fresh westerly wind and slight sea. Ships hauled out of line in turn during the day in order that the troops might carry out musketry practice at a target astern.

Sunday, 25th October, 1914.

We make good progress at about ten knots, and all on board have settled down for the long voyage. We are bound to Albany, there to join up with the ships of the Australian convoy; divine service was held on deck this forenoon, all hands attending.

Monday, 26th October, 1914.

To-day there occurred the first casualty of the voyage; a soldier in the *Ruapehu* died from ptomaine

poisoning, and at four p.m. he was buried with all military honours, the fleet stopping engines during the committal to the deep, the band on board the *Ruapehu* playing a funeral march, and a firing party firing three volleys as the "Last Post" was sounded. It was all very impressive and very sad, coming so early in the voyage.

Tuesday, 27th October, 1914.

Much rain and a rough sea all day, but little wind. Nothing to record.

Wednesday, 28th October, 1914.

We arrived at Albany this morning and anchored in King George's Sound. The Australian convoy is here, a large number of ships. I notice that they are not painted grey as are our ships, from which I gather that the Australian authorities have not done things so thoroughly as the New Zealanders have.

Thursday, 29th October, 1914.

At Albany awaiting orders to sail.

Friday, 30th October, 1914.

Still awaiting orders.

Saturday, 31st October, 1914.

Received sealed orders from the senior naval officer to-day, to be opened after leaving Albany; also received orders to be ready to weigh anchor at six a.m. to-morrow.

Sunday, 1st November, 1914.

At six a.m. the escorting cruisers *Minotaur* and *Sydney* came out of harbour followed by the Australian convoy in their divisions. The New Zealand convoy formed astern of them with the cruiser *Melbourne* bringing up the rear; the sight of such an armada was

most impressive—about forty ships all told—and the weather was glorious. There were ships of all sorts in the convoy, from the stately *Orvieto* to the humble *Southern*, and others of the genus tramp. I was surprised on opening my sealed orders, to find that the New Zealand convoy and the Australian 1st division of ships are to proceed to Cape Town, the remainder to Port Louis, Mauritius.

Monday, 2nd November, 1914.

Fresh north-west wind and rough sea, with occasional showers. Attended to various duties, and obtained the services of a sergeant-major from our very excellent ship's adjutant, Captain Glendenning, for instructional purposes for my men, of whom there are nine sadly in need of being brought up to date with their drill. I am preparing a lecture on naval matters for the benefit of the troops on board which the colonel has requested me to give them when convenient. There does not seem to be much organization in the Australian convoy; they straggle all over the ocean like a flock of sheep, and are most careless in regard to lights; at times they remind one of the appearance of the White City.

Tuesday, 3rd November, 1914.

Fine, with strong wind and rough sea, causing considerable rolling. The health of the troops is good, and the horses seem in splendid condition: I hope the passage through the tropics will not be too much for them. This afternoon two more Australian ships joined up—*Ascanius* and *Medic*—escorted by *Philomel* and *Ibuki*: *Philomel* parted company before dark, returning to New Zealand. We still preserve a northerly course, which makes me think that we are going to Colombo, and not Cape Town, as ordered.

Wednesday, 4th November, 1914.

Moderate north-west wind and heavy swell causing

a certain amount of rolling, which is bad for the horses. All going well with us, but the Australian convoy are very bad at keeping station. It is to be hoped that time will improve them.

Thursday, 5th November, 1914.

Fine warm weather, smooth sea, and light wind. Received a signal in code to-day cancelling the orders about Cape Town, and informing me that our destination would be Colombo. H.M.S. *Minotaur* cruised round the convoy to-day, and on resuming station the following signal was received: *Minotaur* to all ships.

“ The attention of masters of Australian transports is again drawn to the extreme importance of accurate station keeping, especially at night. During last night the second division straggled to seven miles, whereas their line should be three miles in length. The third division straggled to six miles, whereas their line should be three and a half. By this careless station keeping, the masters exposed their ships to an increased risk of being torpedoed by an enemy and also involve the New Zealand convoy in the same danger.

“ The New Zealand convoy are keeping station at three cables apart in excellent order, and their great attention to the convoy orders as regards reduction of lights and their power, merits my warm approval. Two of the Australian ships were signalling last night with lights visible at least ten miles. I again urge the necessity of lights being reduced in power by means of blue bunting or other means.”

Reply to above signal from G.O.C., New Zealand, to *Minotaur*.

“ Many thanks for your message *re* station keeping and lights, which is much appreciated, and I can say well earned, as Commander Ward and all other trans-

port officers and masters of ships have worked very hard, and have taken great pains to carry out your orders on the subject."

This was to be expected sooner or later : gratifying to us of the New Zealand convoy, but unpleasant for the others. This afternoon the Orient liner *Osterley* passed close to us, homeward bound, and very fine she looked. I wondered if my friend H—— were still in her? (H—— was subsequently killed at the battle of Jutland.)

Friday, 6th November, 1914.

Fine and warm, with light breeze and smooth sea. This morning *Maunganui* and ourselves hauled out of line, and stopped, for the purpose of embarking a medical officer from *Maunganui* to assist our medical officer in a serious case of illness which has developed on board us : he goes on to Colombo with us.

Saturday, 7th November, 1914.

We now have the south-east trade wind and tropical weather : smooth seas, clear blue skies with the fleecy white clouds so characteristic of the tropics, and we make steady progress towards our destination. I hear that the case of serious illness we have is one of tetanus. Carried out the usual target practice this morning, and sent my men along to take a hand : it's good for them. This evening after dinner I gave a lecture to the troops on naval matters, which I think interested them, judging from their reception of it.

Sunday, 8th November, 1914.

There are British and Japanese warships in our vicinity to-day, as they can be heard on the wireless. We are now nearing the Cocos Island, and orders have been transmitted to us to exercise special precautions to-night in regard to lights and lookouts, as it is

possible that enemy warships may be in the neighbourhood. Divine service performed as usual this forenoon.

Monday, 9th November, 1914.

About five o'clock this morning as I was getting up, the wireless operator requested me to come to his instrument and listen. I did so, and heard what seemed to me to be the singing spark of the Telefunken system of wireless, as used by the Germans. As none of our convoy were equipped with that system as far as I knew, the circumstance was suspicious, so I determined to communicate with the senior naval officer, but on reaching the bridge I saw that there was an unusual commotion among the fleet, so evidently the suspicious sound emanated from an enemy ship. The *Sydney* was going at great speed to the westward, belching forth volumes of black smoke from her four funnels, with battle ensigns flying; about nine a.m. *Ibuki* and *Melbourne* both went off to the south-west at great speed. At about ten a.m. we were informed by signal that *Sydney* had brought *Emden* to action, and defeated her, and then caused her to beach herself on North Keeling Island; *Emden* was accompanied by a captured British steamer, the *Buresk*, which she was using as a collier; she had a German prize crew on board, who opened the sea cocks and abandoned her; she sunk before we could do anything. There is much excitement on board at the news, and we are all anxious to hear details. *Melbourne* and *Ibuki* rejoined the convoy this afternoon.

Tuesday, 10th November, 1914.

Received a code message to-day to the effect that the enemy cruiser *Koenigsburg* was in our vicinity, and to take special precautions to-night with regard to lights and lookouts. *Minotaur* parted company to-day, the following signals being exchanged :

Minotaur to Maunganui—

I have received orders to proceed on another service. Captain Silver, of the *Melbourne*, will assume command of the convoy and escort. Good-bye, and good luck.

Maunganui to Minotaur—

Very sorry to hear of your departure. The whole of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force thanks you very much for the good care you have taken of us, and all you have done for us. I hope you will be successful on your new service, and both personally and on behalf of this force, wish you the best of luck.—GODLEY.

Minotaur to Maunganui—

Very many thanks for your kind signal. It has been a great pleasure to escort such a well disciplined force and convoy. Wish you all success at the front.—KIDDLE.

This afternoon we stopped and sent the medical officer back to *Maunganui*, and took up our station again by six p.m.

Wednesday, 11th November, 1914.

After the news of the *Emden*, and the possibility of the *Koenigsburg* being in the vicinity, there was a very marked improvement in the ships of the Australian convoy last night: they were actually darkened for the first time since leaving Albany. A little experience is worth a deal of precept.

The reason for the hurried return of the medical officer to the *Maunganui* yesterday was made clear to-day by the receipt of a wireless message from the *Sydney*, saying that she would rejoin the convoy as soon as she had embarked German prisoners and wounded, and the G.O.C. of our force had offered to accommodate wounded in the *Maunganui*. The fine warm weather continues, and we make good progress.

Thursday, 12th November, 1914.

Melbourne parted company to-day, having been ordered on other service. We are now under the wing of our faithful friend and ally *Ibuki*, which must give food for reflection to those among us who, ignorant of Japan and the Japanese, have been loud in their denunciation of that nation as an enemy. *Verb. sap.* Met and exchanged signals with one of the C.P.R. Empress liners this afternoon; she is now an auxiliary cruiser, and an imposing sight with her three large funnels and great size. Great preparations are going forward for the ceremony of "crossing the line" to-morrow.

Friday, 13th November, 1914.

We are now in the doldrums with typical weather—heavy rain and very sultry, but it will not affect the visit of Father Neptune and the time-honoured ceremony in connection with crossing the Equator. At about ten a.m. Father Neptune and his court came on board, and the usual ceremonies of initiation were carried out with some style, and everything went off in first-class style. The captain, the officer commanding troops, and myself were decorated by Father Neptune with various ancient Orders of the Sea: my own runs as follows:

Lieutenant Commander —, Royal Naval Reserve.

We do most heartily commend your efforts in hiding the lights and watching over the welfare of H.M.N.Z. Transport —, and we feel sure that you, as an officer of the Royal Naval Reserve, will in the future, as in the past, most worthily carry out your duty.

We hereby confer on you the High Seas Order of the Obliterated Candle.

We, by our Royal Might and mere motion, do command that you, Captain —, Colonel —, and Lieutenant—, do here and now hand over this

transport and all souls therein to the jurisdiction of Our Majesty, that we may deal with them according to the ancient usages of the High Seas.

Given under Our Hand and Seal at Our High Court held on the Equator, this thirteenth day of November, one thousand nine hundred and fourteen.

NEPTUNE, R. and I.

This ceremony brought back to me memories of boyhood's days in sailing ships, and my own initiation into the mysteries of the sea, many, many years ago. H.M.S. *Hampshire* joined company to-day, and under her wing we proceeded ahead of the Australian convoy at full speed for Colombo.

Saturday, 14th November, 1914.

Much rain and variable winds : nothing of note to record. We should reach Colombo early to-morrow.

Sunday, 15th November, 1914.

Arrived at Colombo at nine a.m., and went into the harbour to take water. Leave was given to the troops to go ashore this afternoon. Many ships of all sorts in the harbour, including the Russian cruiser *Askold*. *Sydney* arrived during the forenoon, but there was no demonstration : she did not appear to be damaged by the late action, only one hole being visible. I learnt that she had suffered little damage, and very few casualties, but the *Emden* had been smashed up, and her casualties were heavy : about one hundred and fifty killed and more than one hundred wounded.

I used to know Colombo well in the years that have fled, having spent four years on the Indian station, and it does not appear to have altered much. Took B—— ashore this morning, and had tiffin at the Galle Face Hotel, afterwards driving out to Mount Lavinia, then back to the Galle Face Hotel for dinner, returning to the ship about midnight.

Monday, 16th November, 1914.

Went on board *Hampshire* after breakfast to see an old shipmate who is now attached to her; we had a long yarn of old days and old shipmates, some of whom have been killed in this war. After leaving *Hampshire* went ashore, met the colonel, and we had lunch together at the Galle Face, then had a swim, and returned to the ship at four p.m. At six p.m. we left the harbour, and anchored outside the breakwater. Seven German prisoners were placed on board, one officer and six men, survivors from *Emden*, for conveyance to Europe.

Tuesday, 17th November, 1914.

Left Colombo this morning in company with Australian first and second divisions; the third division will join us later. H.M.S. *Hampshire* is our escort, *Ibuki* coming on with the other division. The weather is fine, with smooth sea and light breeze—typical north-east monsoon weather. I had a chat with our German officer prisoner to-day, and find that he speaks English quite well. As he had very little in the shape of clothes, I lent him some of mine to go on with, and also fitted him up with shaving tackle.

Wednesday, 18th November, 1914.

Our next port of call is to be Aden. We make good progress at about ten knots, our station being astern of the Australian convoy as usual. The six seaman prisoners appear to have made themselves quite at home, and they are well treated. The officer, von Kloeper, was the first lieutenant of the *Emden*, and at the time of the action he was in command of the captured *Buresk*. We have given him a cabin, and he has his meals with us in the saloon, as he has given his parole, and after all, the famous *Emden* played the game during her adventurous cruise, and was not responsible for the loss of any lives. (At that

time we gave German seamen credit for possessing honour; now we know better, and know them for the murderous pirates they always were at heart.)

Thursday, 19th November, 1914.

Fine north-east monsoon weather and all well with us so far; the horses are keeping in splendid condition, and so far we have not lost one. The men have concerts on deck during the evening, and the German prisoners form part of the audience. As these seas are now clear of the enemy, many of the restrictions regarding lights have been relaxed.

Friday, 20th November, 1914.

The third division of Australians with the Japanese cruiser *Ibuki* joined us this morning, and they proceeded with four of our ships at full speed for Aden. The rest of us are jogging along at the good old ten knots, with the Australian ships keeping station anyhow, as usual. One of the Australian transports, a ship in which I served for a couple of years long ago, passed close to us this evening in taking up another position, and I was able to send a signal to her captain, an old friend of mine.

Saturday, 21st November, 1914.

Some little excitement was caused about five a.m. to-day by a report to the effect that two men had fallen overboard from one of the Australian transports, and on going to the bridge I observed a certain amount of confusion among the Australian ships, lamps flashing, *Hampshire's* search-light burning, and as day broke I saw an upturned boat some distance away and another boat, manned, pulling after it. However, the whole trouble was that there had been a collision between two of the Australian convoy, and the boat had been carried overboard by the impact and they were recovering it. We were not surprised at the

collision; how they have escaped for so long is a mystery. So far, judging by comparison, the appointment of naval transport officers to the ships of the New Zealand convoy has been justified. At first there was a certain amount of opposition from the captains of the ships, but I think that their services have been appreciated by now, as most of the captains were ignorant of naval matters, such as naval signalling, keeping station and manœuvring, etc., and the naval transport officer was there to assist him with the result of his experience in the navy. The Australian convoy of twenty-nine ships only had three naval transport officers between them, hence all the trouble.

Sunday, 22nd November, 1914.

Glorious weather, and just what I revel in. The usual routine duties of inspections, musketry practice, and so on, with nothing to note. Divine service held on deck this forenoon, the Germans attending.

Monday, 23rd November, 1914.

Socotra was sighted soon after breakfast to-day. After dinner the captain, chief engineer, officer commanding troops, and myself generally stretch out in long chairs and yarn, and since the advent of the German prisoners, we have invited von Kloeper to join us, and we hear his views of the war. He is quite confident in the success of the German arms on land, and thinks that our naval power will be broken by the use of submarines: we shall see. He also tells us a lot about the *Emden's* cruise and the places at which they called. They had captured a British steamer laden with coal, so they went with her to the Chagos Archipelago, informed the people there that they were a German warship on a cruise round the world, and that they wished to coal from the ship that was with them. The inhabitants, being unaware that

А.П.О.



APPROACHING ADEN.

we were at war with Germany, as there was no cable or wireless communication, readily granted permission, supplied them with water and provisions, and requested that they would repair their motor-boat, which had broken down, and was beyond their ability to put right. This job the *Emden* did for them, and when they had coaled, etc., they were thanked by the islanders for their kindness, and parted the best of friends, little thinking that they had been helping the King's enemies.

Tuesday, 24th November, 1914.

Still the fine weather continues, and we make steady progress on our voyage. Met a B.I. steamer this morning bound east, and in the evening passed close to an Arab dhow. Von Kloeper gave me a list of the names of the ships sunk by the *Emden*—thirteen of them—a goodly haul of fat, well laden merchantmen. He seems quite a good fellow, and takes his fate most cheerfully, confident in the justice of his cause, and convinced that his Kaiser and his country will be victorious. Well, I do not grudge him his pleasant delusion : his awakening will be a rude one, I think.

Wednesday, 25th November, 1914.

The fine weather continues, and I thoroughly enjoy it. I turn out at five-thirty a.m., have coffee and toast, then up to the bridge in pyjamas, there to enjoy a morning pipe, ever the best of the day, to my mind, and inhale the beauty of the tropical morning, and watch the glories of the sunrise. We saw several vessels during the day, all bound east, some of them transports. Arrived off Aden at five p.m., and anchored ; the rest of our ships are here, also many others. His duty ended, our good and faithful Japanese ally bade us farewell, and departed on other

service, after having escorted us all the way from New Zealand. The following signals passed between us :

To *Ibuki* from *Maunganui*—

Good-bye and thank you very much on behalf of New Zealand and its Expeditionary Force for escorting us so far, and looking after us so well. We all wish you the best of luck and success in your future cruises.

Ibuki to *Maunganui*—

We all join in thanking you most sincerely for all kind feelings so warmly expressed by you towards *Ibuki* throughout my service as the escort of convoy. It was indeed the most eventful one of my life, and personally I feel greatly honoured that this duty fell upon me. Reciprocating your good wishes in every way, I send you our hearty *banzai*. Be success and victory always with you.—KATO, CAPTAIN *Ibuki*.

Thursday, 26th November, 1914.

Sailed from Aden this morning at seven o'clock, the Australian convoy in company, and *Hampshire* escorting. The New Zealand convoy is now in the van and we are making eleven knots, the Australian convoy being astern of us. The following signal from *Hampshire* was received during the day : " The station keeping of the Australian convoy is very poor, even after taking the unavoidable difficulties of the mercantile marine into consideration."

Poor Australian convoy ; they do get it in the neck from all the escorting warships, and they ask for it.

We passed Perim Island at three p.m., using the big strait.

Friday, 27th November, 1914.

The weather is now very hot and sultry, we being

well in the Red Sea. Many ships pass us bound out, and most of them appear to be transports returning to the East for more troops. Von Kloeper appears to have lost his cheerful mien, and has been very dejected for the last day or two. He is probably beginning to realize, seeing so many ships all on warlike service, that his country is up against a tough proposition.

Saturday, 28th November, 1914.

Another hot calm day, in consequence of which the poor old horses are suffering : to-day we lost another, the seventh only since leaving New Zealand, which is a very good record. The outward P. and O. mail steamer passed us this morning, so our sea traffic has not yet been stopped by the aggressive Teuton. This afternoon two B.I. transports joined up with us, both with horses. *Orvieto* and *Maunganui* parted company this evening, and proceeded at full speed towards Suez.

Sunday, 29th November, 1914.

We passed out of the tropics to-day, and have a cool northerly wind, which has freshened the ship considerably, and must be very refreshing to the poor old horses. Von Kloeper is still very subdued, and says very little to anybody. Divine service in the forenoon as usual.

Monday, 30th November, 1914.

Fresh north wind, smooth sea, and beautiful weather. Passed The Brothers Islands this morning, and Shadwan Island this afternoon, and the convoy is now proceeding in single line ahead at full speed up the Gulf of Suez. Many vessels passing bound south. Had a long yarn with B—— this evening about books and bookmen : we shall soon have to part, and regret it, for during this long voyage we have become very

good friends, and have many tastes in common. He is blessed with a keen sense of humour.

Tuesday, 1st December, 1914.

Arrived and anchored off Suez at nine a.m. Orders received to transfer our prisoners of war to *Hampshire*, so we all bade good-bye to von Kloeper, who was really affected at parting, for tears were in his eyes; I took him and his men to the *Hampshire* in one of the ship's boats, and there handed them over. Von Kloeper was decent enough to express his thanks to me for what I had done for him, and said that if ever the fortune of war placed me in his hands, he would try to repay me. We heard that the Australian and New Zealand troops are all to be landed at Alexandria. We entered the Suez Canal at two p.m., and proceeded at the usual snail's pace. At various points on both sides of the Canal, British and Indian troops are encamped, who cheer lustily as we pass.

Wednesday, 2nd December, 1914.

Arrived at Port Said at three a.m., and berthed. H.M.S. *Swiftsure*, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral Peirse, is here; she is the flagship of the East Indian Squadron. I reported on board *Maunganui* after breakfast, and learnt that we were to sail for Alexandria this afternoon. The New Zealand convoy sailed at four p.m. for Alexandria, and there was much cheering from the other ships in harbour as we passed by them, especially from three French warships.

Thursday, 3rd December, 1914.

Arrived off Alexandria at daylight and went to a berth alongside the quay about ten a.m. The long voyage is at last ended, and all is well. I am ordered on other service, and return to Port Said to-morrow, so bade good-bye to all the good fellows of the New

Zealand Expeditionary Force with whom I have made this voyage, and wish them luck wherever they go.

And so ends the record of the transport of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force from New Zealand to Egypt which is, I think, the longest distance that any troops have been transported during war.

THE LANDING

April the twenty-fifth, 1915.

"He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,
Will stand a tiptoe when this day is named,
Old men forget: yet all shall be forgot,
But he'll remember with advantages,
What feats he did that day."

—KING HENRY THE FIFTH.

It was my good fortune to be present on this historic occasion, and to take part with that gallant band of brothers in the landing on the Gallipoli peninsula, and it has occurred to me that the memories and impressions of that great day may be of interest. I was in command of a commissioned yacht at the time, and we were lying in the harbour of Mudros. For some days the weather had been bad—heavy gales from the north-east, with rain—and conditions did not look promising for the landing.

On Friday, the 23rd of April, the weather improved and the day was warm and fine, with a light breeze, and there were indications of it remaining fine. Mudros harbour at this time presented a wonderful sight: never before in the history of the world had there been such an armada of ships, both great and small, gathered together in one place; there were great Atlantic liners, tramps, coasting steamers, London and Liverpool and Calcutta tugs, North Sea trawlers, battleships,

cruisers, destroyers, submarines, and the graceful native sailing craft, a veritable city of ships crammed with the pick of our manhood, all ready and eager for the splendid adventure. On the afternoon of the 23rd, this great fleet of transports weighed anchor, and one after the other slipped slowly towards the entrance of the harbour, the crews of the warships manning their sides and cheering lustily as the latest crusaders passed on their way. Never shall I forget the volume, the tumult, and the pathos of that cheering : it filled my heart with pride and pity : pride in the knowledge that I was of British race, pity at the thought that within so little time many of those gallant hearts would have ceased to beat, and their bodies become part of a foreign soil or mute things for the sea to mock at.

And so the stately ships passed on, the sound of the cheering died on the evening air as the sun sank in the west, and all was peaceful in that picturesque Ægean harbour.

The morning of the 24th dawned calm and bright, and throughout the day there was a suppressed atmosphere of excitement, and an air of animation in the harbour which seemed to indicate great ventures under way. In the afternoon the *Queen Elizabeth* left the harbour, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral de Robeck, and having on board General Sir Ian Hamilton and his staff; the Anzac transports followed, escorted by H.M.S. *Queen* (flying the flag of Rear-Admiral Thursby), *London* and *Prince of Wales*. Their destination was Kephalos, where they were to anchor during the night, and proceed to Gaba Tepe when the moon went down, which would be about three a.m.

My own orders were to be off Cape Helles by six a.m. of the 25th, so shortly before dusk we slipped from our moorings and proceeded outside the boom defence of the harbour and anchored in

readiness to proceed at one a.m., which would bring us to Cape Helles at the time ordered. The night was calm and fine with a bright moon, and lying near to us was a large hospital ship, her illuminated red crosses and green band adding to the calm beauty of the scene, and making it difficult to realize that in a few hours' time we should be in the midst of suffering and death. At about one a.m. on the morning of the 25th, we weighed and proceeded on our lawful occasions, the hospital ship accompanying us, and so eager and excited were we on board, that I think no one among us had the least inclination to sleep.

The moon set at about three a.m., and shortly afterwards the dawn made visible to us the high land on the Asian shore of the Dardanelles, and the masts and funnels of a great armada at anchor under the land. Officially dawn was to be at five a.m., and at that hour the bombardment of the forts was to commence; as we drew near to the great fleet we heard the booming of the ships' guns, and saw the flashes of the Turkish guns on the Asiatic shore firing in reply, and we knew that the greatest bombardment in history had commenced. Nearer and nearer we drew to the land, which was enveloped in a light mist, soon to be dissipated by the blaze of the rising sun; the ships gradually assumed their normal appearance and we were able to distinguish the flagship lying close under the land, her guns intermittently firing, so a course was shaped for her. It was a glorious daybreak, with not a breath of wind, and the sea like glass; as the sun rose, the mists disappeared and the hills, the beaches, and the ships all stood out in bold relief. Soon we were near enough to the flagship to signal and request instructions: these were to go alongside one of the transports and embark the assistant principal naval transport officer. It was no easy task to distinguish one ship from another in that vast assembly,

but we managed to locate the required vessel and soon we were alongside her, and had taken on board the officer mentioned, who was a Captain R.N. Under his directions, we proceeded alongside various ships and transmitted orders to them relative to disembarking their troops and stores, and going thus from one ship to another, we were literally steaming up and down avenues of ships, so many were there present.

The noise of the bombardment was now terrific, and shells from the Turkish batteries on shore were falling among the ships, some of which had to shift anchorage in consequence; we could see the beaches alive with men, and picket-boats and steam pinnaces were going to and fro towing other boats laden with troops, while trawlers made their way from ship to shore crammed with men as they had once been crammed with the harvest of the sea.

It was not possible to distinguish the various ships of war, all engaged on the grim task for which they were built, hurling death and destruction on to those historic shores. There under the Asian shore was the Russian *Askold*, the "packet of woodbines" of the men, so called from the five tall, thin funnels which seemed to grow out of her hull; she was spitting fire from her guns, the sound of which it was easy to distinguish, even in that hellish din, for they had a different note to either the French or our own guns; not far from her was the French *Henry IV*, a quaint type of ship, known irreverently as the "angry cat"; at anchor in the Straits could be seen the *Lord Nelson*, *Agamemnon* and *Cornwallis*, while off the various beaches were the *Albion*, *Implacable* and *Euryalus*, the latter flying the flag of Rear-Admiral Wemyss. Ashore on "V" beach was the famous Trojan Horse, the steamship *River Clyde*; all seemed very quiet on that beach and we wondered what was happening,

not then having either seen or heard of the tragedy of that heroic effort.

I discussed the pros and cons of the situation with the A.P.N.T.O.,¹ and found him a cheerful optimist, holding the view that nothing on shore could withstand the effect of the ships' guns; being a mere lieutenant-commander myself, and he a post-captain, I could not openly disagree with him, but having read something of the effect of ships versus land forts, and also having regard to the high velocity and flat trajectory of the shells from long-range naval guns, I thought otherwise, but refrained from giving expression to my views.

Having completed the task of visiting the various transports, we made for the beaches, with the object of rendering any assistance that might be required; approaching "V" beach, and when close in to the shore, we noticed the stillness which prevailed; no life was to be seen on that small, semi-circular, sandy beach, and all seemed quiet on board the *River Clyde*. We slowed down when quite close to the famous ship, and gazed at the shore: no life visible, but very many still forms were lying about the foreshore in various attitudes, obviously dead; then we could recognize a number of figures crouched under a small sandbank on the beach, and from time to time they moved slightly: had they shown above that sandy ridge, instant death would have been the penalty, for the Turkish gunners concealed in the cliffs with their machine-guns had the exact range of every part of that beach; then we noticed that the lighters connecting the *River Clyde* with the shore were also crowded with men who appeared to be taking cover under the low bulwarks of these craft: they had been men not long previous to our arrival, but what we saw were the dead bodies of the gallant Irishmen of the heroic 29th Division who had perished in their attempt to land.

¹ Assistant Principal Naval Transport Officer.

We had evidently approached too close to the beach to suit the Turks by this time, for a few rifle bullets hummed over our heads as we stood on the bridge of the yacht, and one hit the deck within a few feet of where we stood. Being unable to render any assistance to those on this beach, and our vessel having no form of protection from the rifle fire, the A.P.N.T.O. gave orders to proceed to "W" beach, only about half a mile distant, and ascertain how things were progressing there. This was the beach that was to become known as "Lancashire Landing," after the heroic men of the Lancashire Fusiliers who stormed and held it in face of such fearful odds, justly described by Sir Ian Hamilton as one of the finest feats of arms ever performed by the British or any other soldiers. Again rifle bullets hummed over us, and again, as we could give no assistance, we steamed away on other duties.

During this time boats, tugs and lighters were going to and fro with men and stores, except at "V" beach, which was not secured until the afternoon of the next day: the two or three hospital ships which accompanied the expedition, and which had apparently been considered adequate for the "Dardanelles picnic" by our "wait and see" government, were filled and gone before noon. Frequently during the course of that day, as we steamed about among the transports, we met with steamboats towing boats of wounded men seeking for hospital ships which were conspicuous by their absence, and in our small craft we could give them no assistance, having neither medical officers nor the necessary dressings, etc. Poor fellows: I wonder how many died in agony that day owing to lack of ordinary warlike precautions?

And so the day wore on and the tide of battle ebbed and flowed: some beaches were secured, the fate of others still hung in the balance. Throughout

the day the *Queen Elizabeth*, *Albion*, and other ships maintained a heavy fire from their big guns, which somewhat restrained the Turkish ardour, and assisted our troops to hold what they had taken of the beaches, and this bombardment was continued far into the night. The village of Sedd-el-Bahr was in flames for the greater part of the night, and the effect of the flames shooting up to the sky, the flash of guns firing, the pale light of star shells, made the scene, as witnessed from the deck of a ship, most impressive and awe-inspiring.

As we steamed from ship to ship during the night on various errands, the lights of the vast armada of transports gave one the impression of lamp-lit streets, and the task of locating any particular ship was not so difficult as might be imagined. At about nine p.m. we put the A.P.N.T.O. on board the flagship, and then proceeded to various other duties among the transports, finally receiving orders about midnight to make fast alongside a collier which was at anchor near H.M.S. *Euryalus*, and arrived there, we took what rest was possible.

At daylight the next morning we were off once again on various duties: the bombardment, which had subsided after midnight, was continued with vigour, and we learnt that our troops had made some progress during the night, and that the prospects of holding on were more promising. Early in the afternoon the village of Sedd-el-Bahr was captured at the point of the bayonet, and our men were able to establish themselves on "V" beach. From the deck of the yacht I watched through glasses the advance of our troops, saw them scramble from point to point up the sandy cliffs, men falling and lying where they fell, others falling, then staggering on, some toppling over backwards and rolling to the foot of the sand-hills, and then the flash of their bayonets on the sandy ridge as they

triumphantly drove the Turks from their positions, and advanced towards the ruins of Sedd-el-Bahr, which they captured and held, and so made secure "V" beach. I learnt later that Colonel Doughty-Wylie was killed while leading this glorious attack, a type of British officer we could ill spare; his wife, who was in charge of a British hospital attached to the French, was the only woman, so far as my knowledge extends, to visit the peninsula during the occupation, and she was permitted to visit her husband's grave. During the forenoon of this day I witnessed the burial of those naval men who had been killed on the previous day, and it was a sight which impressed itself clearly upon my memory. Their bodies had been brought from the various beaches to the flagship *Euryalus*, and during the night they had been sewn in their canvas shrouds and laid in rows upon the quarter-deck, covered with the flag for which they had died. The officers and men were mustered on the quarter-deck, the chaplain in his surplice read the service for the burial of the dead at sea, and at the words "commit their bodies to the deep" the canvas shrouded corpses of the gallant dead were slid, one by one, from the planks upon which they were lying, to their last resting-place beneath the blue waters of the Ægean Sea. There were, so far as my memory serves me, nineteen bodies committed to the deep that morning.

Throughout the day we were busily employed in taking various officers from ship to ship, and in the afternoon, when "V" beach had been secured, we landed troops alongside the *River Clyde*, to reinforce the sadly depleted numbers of those who had fought so valiantly to secure that beach.

During the afternoon of the 27th I went ashore at Sedd-el-Bahr and walked through the ruins of that village, picking my way among the dead bodies of Turks, pigs and dogs, and occasionally

passing some of our own dead. Everywhere about me was evidence of the severity of the fighting, and the barbed wire entanglements must have been truly formidable to the men who had to hack their way through them, exposed as they were to rifle and machine-gun fire. I have in my possession a sample of that terrible wire, and I have never before seen such fearsome stuff; compared with our own wire, it is as a steel hawser to cod line, and the barbs on it are an inch long, and capable alone of inflicting a nasty wound. The more I wandered about that beach, the more I wondered at the magnitude of the task of landing on it and securing it: it was a valiant feat of arms, unparalleled in history, and involuntarily I bowed my head to those who had accomplished it. So long as the British Empire can produce men capable of such deeds, so long will she maintain her proud position among the nations of the world.

Throughout the night of the 27th we were busily engaged in landing French troops at "V" beach, going alongside the *River Clyde* for the purpose, and disembarking them there; the task was not an easy one with a vessel the size of the yacht I commanded, for there was a very strong tide running, and skill and judgment were required to manœuvre the vessel alongside without mishap, for she had a clipper bow and a bowsprit, and, moreover, was single screw. However, all went well, and our task was completed at dawn of the 28th, and no sooner was there sufficient daylight for the purpose than the Turkish gunners opened fire on the beach from the Asiatic batteries, fortunately without hitting us. We were constantly employed about the peninsula until the 7th May, when we were temporarily detached and ordered on other service; we had witnessed the bombardment, and taken a minor part in the historic landing on the Gallipoli peninsula; we had seen performed one of the greatest feats of arms

of all time, and proud and glad was I to have had some small share in the glory of those days :

“Before my God, I might not this believe,
Without the sensible and true avouch,
Of mine own eyes.”

—HAMLET.

SAILORS AND BOOKS

"Other relaxations are peculiar to certain times, places, and stages of life, but the study of letters is the nourishment of our youth and the joy of our old age. They throw an additional splendour on prosperity, and are the resource and consolation of adversity; they delight at home and are no embarrassment abroad; in short, they are company to us at night and our fellow-travellers on a journey."—CICERO.

SEAMEN are not bookmen : this is not intended to be an epigram, but is a simple statement of fact.

And yet what body of men have more time at their disposal for reading than sailors, especially those serving in deep-water ships with long periods at sea between ports?

In the course of many years of a sea life in all classes of ships and in all the seas of the world, I have met very few of my brethren of the sea who were book lovers, and in making this statement I do not wish to appear a superior person, for after all is said, has not one of our most brilliant literary men left it on record that "to appreciate literature is a matter of temperament, not of teaching."

I cannot help thinking that sailormen do not realize what they miss by their neglect of books, and if the reading of this article influences only one brother seaman, I shall not consider that I have wasted my time.

Take, for instance, the case of an officer in, say, a passenger or cargo liner; let us assume that he is the chief officer. He will come off watch each night at eight o'clock, and his next watch will commence at four a.m., which leaves him eight hours for rest.

Now, if he turn in at eight-thirty p.m. with a book and his pipe, he can, in any ordinary weather, devote until ten p.m. to reading, which will leave him nearly six hours to rest before his next watch comes round, surely an ample amount of sleep to fortify a man for four hours on duty.

During the course of, let us say, a three months' voyage, what a vast amount of reading could be got through by devoting to it even that hour and a half daily that I have suggested, and the cultivation of literature need not interfere with either duty or other hobbies, for I am not taking into account the hours during the day which are not taken up with duties.

During the years of my seafaring life reading has always been a pleasure, and even as a junior officer my cabin book-shelves were generally well filled. Coming off watch after four hours' vigilance on the bridge, with what pleasure I looked forward to my one or maybe two hours' reading before going to sleep. Having divested myself of oilskins and sea boots, or overcoat and woollen cap, as the case might be, and clad myself in pyjamas, I would ensconce myself in my bunk, light the old briar, and settle down with some favourite author.

If the latitude be a high one, and the night cold and wet, so much the more do I appreciate the warmth and comfort of my cabin, the fragrance of my tobacco, and the contents of my book, secure in the knowledge that I shall not be disturbed unless something unusual occurs. The sound of the rain steadily falling on the deck outside, the tramping to and fro on the bridge of the officer who has just relieved me, and the dull, regular, thud, thud, thud, of the engines, all combine to produce a very soothing effect which must be experienced to be understood.

During the course of a voyage in a passenger steamer, it is always possible to make the acquaintance of someone among the passengers who is a bookman: a chance remark in the course of a chat

on deck, something said at the table, and the magic door is opened; that passenger will soon find his way to your cabin, inspect with interest the contents of your modest sea library, take down here a volume, there a volume, and at last open one at some favourite passage, perhaps reading it to you and asking your views on it. Then, with pipes well under way, and comfortably settled, you would indulge in a book-lovers' chat.

Many, many hours of days gone by have I spent thus, and I treasure the memory of them, and of the many interesting persons I have chatted with, like

"Ships that pass in the night, and speak each other in passing,
Only a signal shown, and a distant voice in the darkness.
So on the ocean of life, we pass and speak one another,
Only a look and a voice, then darkness again and a silence."

The voyage ended and the ship in dock, then would come that weary duty of keeping ship, and what more wearisome or monotonous task can be assigned to a sailorman than this, with the many attractions of a great city within easy distance of the ship? This keeping ship means that one officer must always be on board day and night: if cargo is being loaded or discharged, he will be required occasionally; if work cease at six p.m. then he has nothing to do, but on board he must remain.

It was at such times as these that I would seek solace among my friends the books, and they never failed me. Whatever my mood, there I would find a suitable companion for that mood. Tales of adventure? even in my small library I could always find a place for Conrad and Stevenson; novels? then I would turn to Hardy, Meredith, Dickens or Thackeray; if I required something brief and soothing I would turn to the essays of Lamb, E. V. Lucas, Richard Jefferies or those two best of "dipping" books, Pepys' Diary or Boswell.

To the uninitiated it may perhaps appear that I had at hand a fairly large library for a sailor, but

such was not the case, for my books rarely exceeded fifty in number in my cabin, and when one remembers the many so-called pocket editions of all the classics that are to be obtained at such a moderate price, especially Dent's Temple classics and Everyman's Library, it will be obvious that it does not require either a long purse or a large cabin to enable a sailorman to acquire a useful collection of books and to carry them with him from ship to ship. As to travelling or proceeding on leave, one small wooden case is all the additional luggage that will be required, which is not much when one takes into consideration the amount of pleasure that will be derived from the contents.

How officers who are not bookmen spend their time when keeping ship has always been a puzzle to me. Without my books, whether at sea, in port or at home, the flesh would be a weariness to me, life a bore, and myself unfit company for man or beast, *mais, chacun à son goût, et tous les vaches sont bien gardées.*

CARRYING ON THE WAR

“ When I first put this uniform on,
I said as I looked in the glass,
It's one to a million
That any civilian
My figure and form will surpass.
Gold lace has a charm for the fair,
And I've plenty of that and to spare.”

—SONGS OF A SAVOYARD.

TIME was when the outlook for us was far from bright, so, in order to leave no path to victory unexplored, our government of great, wise, and eminent men appointed a committee of what they called experts to decide upon the advisability of adopting a standard uniform for the Merchant Service. That this committee was not one of experts, goes without saying, but, whatever their ability, they were doing their bit in that sphere to which it had pleased the aforesaid great, wise, and eminent to appoint them. (Two or three tailors could have settled the question in the same number of hours, but that would have been too simple a solution to such an intricate problem as the one involved.) Having decided in favour of adopting a uniform, this body of patriots undertook the grave duty of designing it. Naturally, such a serious undertaking required time (and time is money, so we were told in our copy-books) for mature consideration before any final decision could be arrived at, and doubtless this excellent committee, like many another, bore in mind the inspiring words of the poet Longfellow, who sang :

“Let us then be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate.
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labour and to wait.”

The result of achieving, pursuing and labouring, was what is now known as the standard uniform for the Mercantile Marine, a hybrid thing, which, like a cubist picture, bewilders the eyes of all sane and sober people. Regulations governing the wearing of this latest official freak rig having been duly circulated, the said regulations were being discussed by a group of old shell-backs, evidently the crew of a near-by tramp steamer, and the following was the gist of their remarks (omitting the profanity), so far as the writer could gather :

“ Say, Bill, won’t the old ’ooker look a treat when they’ve all got their new, fancy rig on ? ”

The speaker was a hard-bitten looking old shell-back, whose manner implied that he did not approve of these new-fangled notions, and he was reading extracts from a paper he held, evidently a copy of the regulations before mentioned, and I am endeavouring to reproduce his comments as I heard them.

“ Master,” said he ; “ why, that’ll be the Old Man ; ‘ four rows of ’arf-inch gold lace on each sleeve.’ Lor lumme, almost as much as Jellicoe ’isself ; the old boy’ll be as pleased as a dog with two tails, and both of ’em waggin’ at once, when ’e gets ’isself into that rig.

“ Double-breasted overcoat, with a strap behind, and fancy gilguys on the shoulders ; frock-coat, too, with more gold lace on the sleeves, and buttons before and behind wherever there’s room for ’em.

“ Second engineer (that’ll be old Mac), he gets three rows of half-inch gold lace with purple cloth between ’em ; frock-coat, too, for Mac, but there ain’t no mention of a top ’at, and they don’t say nothin’ about spats, neither ; I reckon as they ought to ’ave

spats, and one of them 'ere monologues what goes in your eye.

"Then there's a long rigmarole about white drill mess jackets and white undress tunics (what they wears when they turn in, I suppose—sort o' night-shirt, in a manner o' speakin') with gold lace on the shoulders.

"Trousers, blue cloth, but there ain't nothin' said about gold lace on 'em; I call that a nasty one, I do; there's 'eaps o' room on a pair o' trousers for gold lace.

"Neckties, too; plain black silk neckties; and gloves, my sons, brown dogskin gloves. 'Oly sailor! ain't there goin' to be some style when our old scrap 'eap goes to sea again."

"Anythin' said about umbrellas, 'Arry?" queried one of the group.

"Not a word, my son, not one ruddy word, and what's more, there ain't nothin' about trousers-stretchers nor polishin' gear for all the brass work on the peak o' the Old Man's 'at, the gold lace on the mate's frock-coat, an' the shoulder straps of the second engineer's white drill undress tunic."

"Aye, my sons, there's a lot they've overlooked, and I do 'ate the thought of all that space on a pair o' trousers bein' wasted. Arter all that bilge, let's go and 'ave one." (*Exeunt omnes.*)

And it is a sad commentary on the depravity of human nature to think that low, vulgar sailormen dare ridicule the work of the expert great.



А.П.О.